

For all men who have been confused,  
misused and abused by women, particularly  
since the coming of feminism;  
and definitely not for women.

# *Anatomy of Female Power*

A Masculinist Dissection of Matriarchy



***Chinweizu***

# Anatomy of Female Power

In this brief treatise, Chinweizu challenges one of the fundamental premises of feminism. He shows how women rule men, and have always ruled men; and he outlines what men might do to reduce female power and so advance toward equality, in hardships and privileges, with women.

The best education for men on the sex controversy.  
Every man born of woman must arm himself with  
this book.

— Naiwu Osahon

Chinweizu has done it again. As with *The West and the Rest of us*, he has taken on a difficult and controversial subject, forced it under his sardonic and demanding eye, and come up with observations that spare neither men nor women.

Menfolk may beat their breasts in joy that one of their own has finally worked up sufficient courage to repudiate the malicious claims that men are natural oppressors of women. But they can hardly feel flattered by Chinweizu's equally contemptuous charge that men, far from being masters of the earth, have in fact been duped and beguiled and enslaved by women from the beginning of time.

This is hilarious reading. No one can read this brief treatise and not confess to some powerful feeling, either of vengeful excitement or of virulent rage. It is strong stuff indeed, and it should do something to our traditional notions concerning the sociology of history.

— Stanley Macebuh

#### *Highlights from the book*

- Feminism is a revolt in paradise.
- Men may rule the world, but women rule the men who rule the world.
- When his penis stands up a man's brain takes French leave.
- The primary objectives of motherpower are to prepare boys so they can be ruled by their future wives, and to train girls to rule their future husbands.
- The brunt of the double standard is borne, not by women, but by men.
- A *macho* is a strutting factotum with bulging biceps, stone-dry eyes, brains that are ruled by his gonads, and an ego indoctrinated to believe that he is the lord and master of the woman who rules him.
- The modern *musho* (the new or feminal man) is one of that breed of diffident men who have been bullied, guilt-tripped, ego-bashed and penis-twisted into pram pushing, diaper changing and breast envy.



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## ***Chinweizu***

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## Dedication

To the handful of women now in my life (platonic  
friends, lovers, ex-lovers, lovers-to-be);

To the countless others who have slipped in and  
out of my life; and especially

To those who have attempted to marry me:  
From them I have learnt most of what I know  
about women.

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## *Prologue*

### **Who Rules Who — Man or Woman?**

In the last couple of decades, feminist propaganda has sought to persuade the world that women are powerless in society, and that men are natural oppressors of women. It claims that wives are subordinate to their husbands in the home; and that, outside the home, men have excluded women from political, economic and cultural power.

Some, like Ellen Galford of Britain, say: "Women are slaves and men are masters".<sup>4</sup>

Some, like Andrea Dworkin of the USA, say: "All housewives are economically exploited; all working women are".<sup>5</sup>

And some, like Carol Hanisch of the USA, have even gone so far as to deny that women have any power at all over men:

The term *men's liberation* was derived from the term *women's liberation* and thus insinuates that women have power over men. Its very name infers liberation from female domination and is therefore an inversion of fact as well as women's liberation principles.<sup>6</sup>

As a rule, those few women have not been taken seriously who have bothered to acknowledge female power over men: like Denyse Plummer, the Trinidadian calypso singer, who proclaims that "woman is boss";<sup>7</sup> or like the expatriate Nigerian actress Patti Boulaye, who says: "most men are controlled by women";<sup>8</sup> or like the Argentinian, Esther Vilar, who said:

Women let men work for them, think for them and take on their responsibilities — in fact, they exploit them.<sup>9</sup>

This great division of opinion among women should prompt one to ask: Which kind of claim is true? Which picture is the illusion, and which the reality?

Conventional modern opinion, as well as the social science consensus, would appear to support the feminist picture. It is conventionally assumed that female power, if it existed, would be wielded by women, through some public system of authority. It is also held, by conventional expert opinion, that matriarchs (who would be the natural wielders of female power) are illusory; and that matriarchy (a system of females wielding authority) does not exist.

For instance, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (6th Edition, 1976) defines a matriarch as a “woman corresponding in status to a patriarch (usually jocular)”. The venerable compilers of that dictionary add that the word is derived “from Latin *mater* mother on false analogy of patriarch”. Treating the notion as a joke derived on a “false analogy” suggests that matriarchs are illusory, phantom figures. However, powerful matrons, often elderly, who dominate family groups and clans, who are patriarchs in all but their gender, are neither unknown nor rare.

Similarly, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (15th Edition, 1986) matriarchy is a “social system in which familial and political authority is wielded by women”. And that repository of conventional knowledge adds that “the consensus among modern anthropologists and sociologists is that a strictly matriarchal society never existed.” This is despite the fact that, in some African and Native American societies, women did have their structures of political authority parallel to and countervailing those of men.

When a definition will not allow us to acknowledge what is before us, it is flawed. For example, if we defined the sun as a square star, it would then be, strictly speaking, true that there isn't and never has been a sun. But since such a claim flies in the face of our experience, we would have to reject that definition for not capturing the reality, and for misleading us into the absurdity of denying the existence of the sun we can see and point at. On similar grounds, we would have to reject the conventional definitions of matriarch and matriarchy for flying in the face of the examples cited above.

In any case, even if no “strictly matriarchal society” ever existed, that would not imply that female power did not exist. Authority is only one of the many types of power; and the wielding of authority is not necessary for the exercise of many types of power. Power without authority

is neither unknown nor rare, as is recognized when it is said that someone is "the power behind the throne".

Such obscurantist views from the organs of conventional knowledge suggest that female power has yet to receive the investigation it deserves.

Feminist propaganda and conventional knowledge notwithstanding, it seems *prima facie* odd to claim that women are powerless in society and, in particular, over men. If the essence of power is the ability to get what one wants, then women are far from powerless. Women do get, and always did get, what they want – be it riches, or thrones, or the head of John the Baptist, or routine exemption from hardships and risks which their men folk are obliged to endure. That women operate by methods which often differ from those available to men does not in any way mean that women are bereft of power.

If women are not powerless, are they, perhaps, less powerful than men? Some feminists find it in their interest to have the world believe this. And for proof they point to the public structures of political, economic and cultural power, and show that these are almost exclusively occupied by men. But does that prove what they aim to prove? Not at all! All it shows is that in the public structures, which form the domain of male power, women are not well represented. If this under-representation is to prove that women are less powerful than men, it would need to be also true that those public structures exhaust the modes and centers of power in society. Alas, for feminist claims, they do not; for there indeed are other modes and centres of power which women monopolize. Such are the subjects of this inquiry.

In those centres, women control scarce resources, commodities and opportunities; and they distribute them. They exercise power through education, propaganda, directives, suggestions, rewards and punishments. They wield instruments of persuasion and coercion.

As this inquiry shall show, matriarchs (who wield female power) and matriarchy (an organized structure or institution for the exercise of female power) do exist, indeed have always existed. The power they wield is neither illusory nor a joke. Furthermore, in human society, it is not male power but female power which is supreme. Or rather, to change the imagery, however great male power may be, it is to female power what that one-seventh of an iceberg which is visible above water is to the six-sevenths which lies below the water line.

As we shall see, the male modes of power are actually tributary to the female modes, in as much as the fruits of male power are poured at

the feet of women through the workings of female power. That men seek wealth, power, status and fame for the love of women is widely attested to by knowledgeable commentators. According to Esther Vilar: "Man's work is only done with woman in view".<sup>10</sup>

And from his studies of the human psyche, Sigmund Freud reports:

... in the greater number of ambitious day-dreams, too, we can discover a woman in some corner, for whom the dreamer performs all his heroic deeds and at whose feet all his triumphs are to be laid.<sup>11</sup>

From his own experience, Aristotle Onassis, an ambitious and very successful businessman of this 20th century, confirms this when he declared: "If women didn't exist all the money in the world would have no meaning".<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, male preoccupation with wealth, power, fame and status in order to win the love of women is quite natural, being rooted in the animal origins of humanity. As Robert Ardrey reports, it would be unreasonable,

in the light of our new knowledge of animal behaviour...to conclude that feminine attraction for wealth and rank, and masculine preoccupation with fortune and power and fame are human aberrations...<sup>13</sup>

If the natural goal of male power is to pay tribute to women, then male power is naturally tributary to female power. If, however powerful a man may be, his power is used to serve the women in his life, that would make dubious the notion that men are masters over women. Because every man has as boss his wife, or his mother, or some other woman in his life, men may rule the world, but women rule the men who rule the world. Thus, contrary to appearances, woman is boss, the overall boss, of the world.

To understand why woman rules man, we need to examine female power and how it operates on men.

## **Part I**

### **Features of Female Power**

## 1. The Five Pillars of Female Power

You reckoned without the powers of a woman; they always know what they want and they get it in the end.<sup>14</sup>

— Remark at a Nigerian party.

Female power exists; it hangs over every man like a ubiquitous shadow. Indeed, the life cycle of man, from cradle to grave, may be divided into three phases, each of which is defined by the form of female power which dominates him: motherpower, bridepower, or wifepower.

From birth to puberty, he is ruled by motherpower, as exercised over him by his one and only “mummy dearest”. Then he passes into the territory of bridepower, as exercised over him by his bride-to-be, that cuddlesome and tender wench he feels he cannot live without. This phase lasts from puberty to that wedding day when the last of his potential brides finally makes herself his wife. He then passes into the domain of wifepower, as exercised over him by his own resident matriarch, alias his darling wife. This phase lasts till he is either divorced, widowed or dead.

In each phase, female power is established over him through his peculiar weakness in that stage of his life. Motherpower is established over him while he is a helpless infant. Bridepower holds sway over him through his great need for a womb in which to procreate; if he didn't feel this need, he wouldn't put himself into the power of any owner of a womb. Wifepower is established over him through his craving to appear as lord and master of some woman's nest; should he dispense with this vanity, not even the co-producer of his child could hold him in her nest and rule him.

There are five conditions which enable women to get what they want from men: women's control of the womb; women's control of the kitchen; women's control of the cradle; the psychological immaturity of man relative to woman; and man's tendency to be deranged by his own

excited penis. These conditions are the five pillars of female power; they are decisive for its dominance over male power. Though each is recognized in popular jokes and sayings, their collective significance is rarely noted.

There is a joke which goes thus:

1st woman: The way to a man's heart is through his belly.

2nd woman: Aren't you aiming a few inches too high?

This joke pays tribute to how the womb and the kitchen control the feelings of men. A man can be controlled by the hunger in his belly, and by the other hunger which flares up just below his belly. Consequently, he can be manipulated by whoever controls the kitchen which feeds him, or by whoever carries the womb through which he craves to procreate.

That man abandons the kitchen to woman, and grovels for access to a womb, are not ordained by nature or by god, but result from how woman, who controls the cradle, has chosen to condition boys and girls. We must remember the saying that "the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world".<sup>15</sup> That is so because whoever trains a child in its first years shapes it for life. Woman, who rules the nursery, shapes boys and girls for life; and the ways in which she shapes boys make them what they become as men.

Women enjoy two other advantages which are the subjects of popular sayings. It is said that a man comes of age at 60, and a woman at 15; which is why, in the eyes of women, men are babies or, at best, little boys. When Nora Ephron of the USA declared: "Men are little boys",<sup>16</sup> she was voicing a view held, and frequently articulated, by women all over the world. That men are babies or little boys is why a bride can fool her suitor, however much older than her he may be; and why a wife can rule her husband so readily. Being a baby in the hands of his bride or wife, the suitor or husband is rare who discovers the true nature of the courtship or marital encounter before it is all too late for him; he often does not do so till he is shoved into his grave, leaving whatever he has accumulated, through a lifetime of toil and risk, to his widow to make merry with.

It is also said that when his penis stands up a man's brain takes French leave. Which is why a woman who wants to rule a man first gets his penis to stand up and salute her.

How did female power acquire these five pillars from whose tops it dominates men? The womb is evolution's priceless gift to woman; man's

psychological immaturity and his deranging penis are evolution's special handicaps on man. As if these natural advantages were not great enough, women have artfully annexed the kitchen and the cradle, and turned them into control centres from which to manipulate men.

Of these five pillars, the womb is by far the most important. Because it is of exceptional importance in reproduction, because woman has a monopoly of it, and because of man's irrepressible craving to use it, the womb has become woman's supreme headquarters for manipulating men. It is female power's ultimate base.

## **2. Womb, Kitchen and Cradle: Control Centres of Female power**

I use my brain and my uterus to achieve my goals.

— A Nigerian tycoon's wife.

What right do men have to infringe on territories most wives have held erring husbands with? (Said apropos of the kitchen)<sup>17</sup>

— Bunmi Fadase

The way a twig is bent, that way the tree will grow.

— An ancient saying.

Everyday of a man's life, he is subject to the dictates of womb, kitchen and cradle. The first set to rule him belongs to his mother; the second belongs to his wife. The first rules him in his vulnerable infancy; the second in his ambitious adulthood. His bride exploits his nostalgia for his mother's set, and manipulates his craving for his future wife's. Thus it is that mother, bride and wife control a man everyday of his life by playing on his changing needs for womb, kitchen and cradle.

The power of the womb is great. It holds the mightiest of men in thrall. Be he a Caesar or a Croesus, a Rameses or a Genghis Khan, a womb will bring him to his knees when he seeks access to it. Consider any man and any woman when they set out to reproduce themselves. She needs his sperm; he needs her egg; without the one, the other cannot procreate. At the level of their complementary biological donations to the child, neither has the whiphand over the other. A fair and uncoerced collaboration is possible.

Enter the womb — that factory where egg and sperm, having combined, grow till the fetus is ready to be born. Alas, for the man, that indispensable factory belongs to the woman and the woman alone.

Woman's monopoly of the womb loads the mating encounter in her favour. It reduces the man to a supplicant. Since he is driven to survive through his progeny, he will pay any price to be allowed the use of a womb. He has little recourse. Should he seize her factory against her will, by subterfuge or by force, she can thwart him by aborting the fetus, or by smothering the child at birth. It is therefore in his interest to yield to her terms, whatever they may be. If he must, he will conquer the whole world and lay it at a woman's feet in order to be allowed to use her womb. Confronted with her monopoly over the womb, the man is obliged to be her slave if that is the price she demands; and she does.

A woman knows that she has the monopolist's whiphand over her suitor; and she knows how to crack the whip and bow his head. Contemplate this rebuke, from an Igbo maiden's song, addressed to a suitor: "Have you come, empty-handed, to marry me?" Also consider the scorn in this rejection of her poor suitor by a Bashi girl from Zaire:

'You want to marry me, but what can you give me? A nice field?'

'No, I have only a house.'

'What? You have nothing but a house? How would we live? Go to Bukavu; there you can earn plenty of money. You can buy food and other things.'

'No, I won't go. I don't know the people there. I have always lived here, and I know the people and want to stay here.'

'You are a stupid man. You want to marry me but you have nothing. If you don't go to Bukavu and earn money to buy me things then I won't marry you.'<sup>18</sup>

In anticipation of the bride's demands, and of her monopolist's veto powers, a man is trained to seek adventure and win the world; by laying the booty at her feet, he can avoid her withering scorn and rejection. Of course, man's situation is not as terrible as that of the male mantis which is obliged to surrender his life when he mates; but it is close enough: man is obliged to surrender his liberty and his earnings when he mates.

From puberty onwards, when procreative hormones take possession of him, the quest for a fruitful womb dominates the male's behaviour. Its consequences have been known to alter the settled course of history.

In the case of England's Henry VIII, his quest for a womb that would yield him a male heir caused him to seek annulment of his first marriage so he could marry some other woman. When the Pope denied him his wish, Henry VIII broke with the Church of Rome, set up the Church of England with himself as its head, and got his desire. When his second wife, Anne Boleyn, proved unable to bear him a male heir, he chopped off her head, and married his third wife.

So intense is the male craving for a fruitful womb that, after a man has found one, he feels obliged to secure it against all other users. This has led many a husband to kill a "cheating" wife, or to kill her lover, and get himself hanged for his trouble. The Trojan war is perhaps the most notorious example of what men will do to maintain exclusive rights in a womb. Menelaus, king of Sparta, made war on Paris, a prince of Troy, for carrying off Helen, Menelaus's wife. By the time he got her back, Troy had been razed to the ground, and the flower of the manhood of the Eastern Mediterranean lands had perished.

Yes indeed! A woman with a fruitful womb is most precious to a man; contrariwise, a woman without a fruitful womb is of scant value to a procreative man, and holds little power over him.

O womb, your power is great! You are the biological foundation, the taproot of female power. As the goal net into which a man must shoot if he is to procreate, you are that part of a woman for which he will pay almost any price. And because you are priceless to him, you hold untold power over him, like a fabulous gold seam which rules a prospector's life.

The power of the kitchen is also great, for it is the power over hunger. Hunger can break the hardest will; can reduce the headstrong man to whimpering obedience; can scatter a mighty army without wasting even a bullet. Military commanders use hunger against besieged cities; torturers use it; wives use it. Since the power of hunger is terrible, whatever holds power over hunger is great indeed. And the kitchen holds power over hunger. It holds the power to sate as well as the power to starve; and it wields that power every day. As a Yoruba saying has it: "I ate yesterday does not interest hunger"; or as the ancient Egyptians said: "Yesterday's drunkenness does not quench today's thirst."<sup>19</sup>

The kitchen is the daily operations centre of female power. By feeding him his choice meals, or by not serving him any meal at all, the woman who is the commandant of his kitchen can manipulate any man. Woe unto him who depends entirely on his wife for his meals: a galley

slave's life would be paradise in his sight. Should he offend her, or should he not knuckle fast enough to her whims, he will feel the rats of hunger gnaw through his empty stomach; and should he complain about whatever scraps and bones she eventually sets before him, he shall find himself eating a dessert of heart-wounding words. O kitchen, your power is great; and woman, who rules the kitchen, is therefore powerful indeed.

The power of the cradle is also great; for the way the twig is bent, that way the tree will grow. The cradle is the bootcamp where every raw recruit is trained for induction into the human community, where basic habits are ingrained. Habits are more powerful than commands; for commands can only work where there already is a habit of obedience: the power of the cradle's commandant can, therefore, never be overestimated.

Mothers use their cradelpower in the strategic interest of female power. In the nursery, they channel boys towards certain kinds of behaviour, and guide them away from others. The boy-child is taught to disdain cooking, child caring and house keeping; but the girl-child is encouraged to learn them. A boy showing keen interest in such skills is branded a "sissy", or mocked as unmanly or effeminate. The boy-child is also taught to revere and obey mother, and to hunger for her smile and approval. These lessons mark him for life. His disdain for child-rearing skills will ensure that, when he grows up, he will abandon the nursery to his wife, so she can dominate it and shape the next generation to suit women's interest. His disdain for cooking will put his stomach into the hands of whatever woman cooks for him in adult life. His reverence for his mother, and his habit of obeying her, prepare him to revere and obey any woman, such as his future wife, whom he makes into his mother-surrogate.

O cradle, you power is great! By conditioning a boy-child's ego, you lay the foundations upon which female power will build its structures over him.

The womb's basic power, the cradle's strategic power, the kitchen's tactical power; to hold any one of these is to have great power; to hold all three is indeed to have overwhelming power. Somehow, women hold all three. God or evolution (take your choice of explanation) gave the womb to woman. But, as feminists quite rightly point out, there is no reason, intrinsic to child rearing or to cooking, why the cradle or the kitchen should be under woman's control. One must therefore marvel

at how woman took control of them. In quietly annexing the cradle, and in seizing control of the kitchen during the original division of labour between the genders (alias the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden!), woman pulled off the most consequential coup in human history. That coup guaranteed that, however mighty a man may become, he will submit to be ruled by woman. With these three pillars of power in her domain, a man and all his possessions, tangible and intangible, are woman's to dispose of.

In the light of the above, we must ask: If men are so powerful, how come they allow women to keep control of the kitchen and the cradle? Could it simply be that men are not as clever as women, and so have failed to realize that whoever rules the womb and the kitchen and the cradle rules the world? Could it be that, even if men should understand the situation, they would not dare to overthrow female power? Could it be that the courage and skill needed to overthrow female power would be greater than that which went to make all the political revolutions in all of history? Could it be that, compared to a revolution against female power, the American, French, Russian, Chinese and other revolutions would look like child's play?

Even if men found the enlightenment and the courage to challenge female power, its dominion over them would not be easily ended. Woman's control of the womb is unassailable, and will remain so until such a time as cloning makes the womb unnecessary for procreation. So, if research into cloning is blocked, you can guess in whose interest it is done.

Any movement to deprive women of their control of the kitchen can expect to be resisted, with all the methods, devious and direct, at the disposal of women. If in doubt about that, consider the following comment by a Nigerian woman columnist, Bunmi Fadase, after she had enjoyed a man's cooking:

As I licked the last drop (of gravy) off my fingers, I became a bit uncomfortable. What right do men have to infringe on territories most wives have held erring husbands with? . . . So there you are girls! When next you are in the kitchen and hubby wants to know what and what you're putting in the stew pot, shut the lid firmly on the pot. Better still, wake up in the middle of the night to do your cooking.<sup>20</sup>

In like manner, any movement to hand the cradle over to men will be resisted with everything women have got. Note this: even the most extreme of feminists do not go so far as to advocate that women abandon control of the cradle; if they did, other women would lynch them. They may insist that the man assist, but they would never abandon the cradle to him altogether. Feminists may demand creches in workplaces, but the creches are still to be run by women — as in the kibbutzim of Israel. The cradle business may be reorganized to accommodate women's new ambitions, but the reorganization will only be permitted to shift control from some women to some other women, but never to men.

Why, despite all this, is there the illusion that a power as durable and ubiquitous as female power hardly exists? Why is there the illusion that power is an affair that belongs exclusively in the male sphere? These illusions are fostered by the contrasting characteristics of male and female power; by a male-centred view of what power is; and, paradoxically, by the very ubiquity and assured superiority of female power.

Whereas male power is hard, aggressive and boastful, female power is soft, passive and self-effacing. Whereas male power is like an irresistible force, female power is like an immovable object. Whereas male power acts like a storm, full of motion, sound and fury, female power is like the sun — steady, quiet and uncontested. Against resistance, male power barks, commands and pummels, whereas female power whispers, manipulates and erodes.

Of women students of angling it has been said:

They don't use brute strength, but rely instead on technique, which is what learning to cast properly is all about.<sup>21</sup>

— Andrew Murray, flycasting instructor.

And as with angling for fish, so with angling for men.

Of women rugby players, it has also been said:

Women tend to emphasize skill rather than aggression, which makes for a better game.<sup>22</sup>

— Keith Evans, coach of a women's rugby team.

And as with rugby, so with other games of outmaneuvering aggressive brutes.

Generally, then, whereas male power tends to be crude, confrontational and direct, female power tends to be subtle, manipulative, and indirect. Whereas aggressiveness is the hallmark of male power, maneuver is the hallmark of female power. And where man is the great physical aggressor, woman is the great psychological maneuverer.

From a male-centred view of what power is, it is easy to be misled into thinking that a female form of power does not exist at all; and even when female power is recognized, it is easy to dismiss it as power of an inferior type, just because it is not hard, aggressive or boastful like the highly visible male form.

But just as the sun, from an earthbound perspective, seems to move around the earth, whereas, in reality, it is the earth which moves around the sun, so too with female power when it is seen from the perspective of male power. And just as the air, though everywhere, is hardly noticed, so too with female power: its quiet ubiquity acts like a camouflage. Its vastly greater might is so well entrenched, in both biology and social arrangements, that it does not need to call attention to itself, and so goes largely unremarked. This all makes female power hard to see, hard to challenge, and even harder to overthrow. In contrast, male power, being the weaker power, bullies and bays for acknowledgement, and so appears greater than it really is.

Let us turn now to the phases of female power (namely mother-power, bridepower and wifepower) and explore how each is organized and exercised.



## **Part II**

## **Motherpower: In the Nest of His Father's Matriarch**

### **3. The Commandant of the Cradle**

Women . . . control the nursery, and because they control the nursery,  
they can potentially modify any life style that threatens them.<sup>23</sup>

— Marvin Harris

Motherpower is the least baleful form of female power over man. Of course, a badly behaved boy may be disciplined by being smacked, threatened or berated, or by having his dinner withheld. But, all in all, the exercise of kitchen and cradlepower over the boy-child is mild and benign. Because of the sexual incapacity of the baby boy, and because of the incest taboo when the boy reaches puberty, his mother's wombpower is rarely unleashed on him.

Motherpower over a boy is anchored on his awe for the mysterious ability of the person who gave birth to him; on his gratitude to the nurse who cares for him, who protects him in an unfamiliar and often frightening world; and on his respect for his first teacher. It is exercised through the subtle manipulation of his hunger for mother's warmth, approval and praise; and through the sometimes unconcealed manipulation of his gratitude. Among the Igbo, as elsewhere,

The final appeal a mother would make to an undutiful and rebellious child would be: 'Whatever you may become and wherever you may go, I bore you, for nine months, in this my womb; and fed you, till you were weaned, with these my breasts.' That person must be an exceptionally unimaginative and remorseless child who would not respond with filial repentance and obedience to this irresistible pull at the human heart-strings.<sup>24</sup>

Such manipulation of guilt feelings is only one of motherpower's methods for ruling its offspring. According to Helene Deutsch:

Many mothers in their attempts to tie their children to themselves appeal cleverly and consistently to their guilt feelings: 'You will abandon me, who have suffered so much?' Others manage to occupy the place of the ego ideal so deeply and permanently that any weakening of the child's relation to the mother is felt by him to be dangerous for his inner morality. A domineering, matriarchal woman often achieves rule over her children by setting up a common ideology, thus gratifying her tendency to dominate.<sup>25</sup>

The techniques of motherpower are perhaps best revealed in those battles where adult daughters fight for independence from their mothers. In some cases, we may be privileged to watch two adepts at female power analyse their game, even as they are deep in it. In one such battle, the daughter lists the main techniques by which her mother had controlled her up until her revolt at age 34! Chief among them were:

- 1) making "supposedly casual comments" which cast slurs on the daughter's friends and husband;
- 2) making the daughter "feel pressured, nervous and incapable of ever pleasing you";
- 3) making the daughter feel excluded from a family "club which I don't belong to, don't want to belong to, but feel that I should belong to. Also a club that I pretend, in your presence, to belong to, and this pretense makes me feel nervous";
- 4) making the daughter "feel guilty as hell" if she did something "knowing as I was doing it that I was displeasing you, 'upsetting' you";
- 5) making the daughter "feel so anxious to please you";
- 6) manipulating the daughter's "little-girl fear of Something Terrible Happening And It All Being My Fault"; her fear of being wrong and being proved wrong: "And when you get into your 'bad moods' (which, from my point of view, are unpredictable), this fear runs rampant";
- 7) trying "to pull a guilt trip on *me* by saying I'm 'discarding' you", or by "repeating how 'hurt' my letter made you";
- 8) using "the maneuver of calling me 'unliberated', or anything equivalent";

9) using "one of the classic maneuvers, used unconsciously by parents everywhere" of saying: "I want you to know how much you've upset me"; 'I could tell you a few things – but I won't'; 'After all I've done for you . . .'; 'If you could remember some of the things you did when you were little . . .'; 'I see you've given up all your (meaning 'our') principles'; 'I see that husband of yours is poisoning your mind'; 'But, in spite of it all, I want you to know that you're very important to us, that we still love you'.<sup>26</sup>

Note how these techniques deftly play on the daughter's fears, guilt, ignorance, remorse, shame, sense of ineptitude, relief at being forgiven, etc.

Backed into a corner by this exposure of her tactics, the mother countered:

I don't know what to say. If I question some of your statements, it might sound as if I were challenging you. If I ask for clarification, it would sound as if I were getting bogged down on petty details. If I talk about feeling, it might seem that I'm hurt. If I deny what you ascribed to me, it puts you on a guilt trip. If I stand on my principles or quote from my heroines or heroes, it might sound pompous or self-righteous. Nonetheless, I do have to say a few things. I wasn't 'hurt' (although I may have said that to you).<sup>27</sup>

Having here practically admitted that her claim of being 'hurt' was a ruse, she goes on:

My immediate feeling was humiliation, a powerful wave of humiliation that almost knocked me over. A few days later, this changed to anger. But all the time, I was thinking. I read your letter, sentence by sentence, and made copious comments in the margins. I racked my lousy memory to recall some of the things you wrote about. One bitter day, I listened to a Mozart quintet. Tears dropped into my lap, one after another, and I wrote a note to you and put it in my will. Well, time passed. I erased the comments and tore up the note. We talked a little and saw each other. I know that I love and care for you, perhaps as Johann says at the end of *Scenes from*

*a Marriage*, ‘—in my inadequate way’, and I think you love and care for me, too. So what more is there to say?<sup>28</sup>

In parading her humiliation, anger, bitterness and tears, as well as her “love and care”; and in hinting at her power to amend her will, the mother inadvertently authenticated her daughter’s list of her weapons of control.

Many a son is only vaguely aware of being ruled, through such precise techniques, by his mummy dearest. A vague awareness makes it unlikely that he will ever stand up to his mother; and even if, by some miracle, he did, he is not likely to battle effectively against a power he hardly understands. With a daughter, matters are different. As her mother’s apprentice, a daughter learns the game, is privy to its techniques, and could effectively counter her mother’s moves if she got up the courage. The result of such knowledge is that the average daughter can, at some point, shake off her mother’s authority, whereas the ignorant son cannot. Her hold over him usually lasts till his death; even if she dies before him, her hold is maintained through his ingrained desire to please her memory.

The classic example of the man who is ruled all his life by his mother is the great macho dictator presented in so many Latin American novels, most notably in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Though a bloodthirsty and ruthless dictator; though a generalissimo and the everlasting patriarch of his nation, he always felt for his mother the obedient, babyish awe he learned to feel for her when he fed at her breast.

But what is motherpower used for? The primary objectives of motherpower are to prepare boys so they can be ruled by their future wives, and to train girls to rule their future husbands. To this end, the main tasks of motherpower are these:

- 1) to lay the appropriate personality foundations in the children: narcissism in girls, and heroism in boys;
- 2) to secure kitchen power and cradle power for girls; and
- 3) to magnify wompower by teaching sexual restraint to girls, through codes of modesty, while undermining sexual self-control in boys by addicting them to the female body.

**Consider a beautiful girl and a strong boy. When they are successfully reared by motherpower, they mature into their respective gender-ideals: the dolly bird and the macho. To bring this about, the girl is taught self-worship or narcissism; the boy heroism or self-sacrifice. Her narcissism induces an absolute self-centredness which smothers those self-sacrificing impulses which are fostered in the boy by male codes of honour, gallantry and heroism. When they grow up, the dolly bird will worship herself; but the macho will worship woman and serve her, even to the point of sacrificing his life to preserve hers.**

**The future dolly bird is trained in narcissism on the principle that a woman must worship herself if she is to inspire worship, and so elicit service from men. Narcissism is taught her by everything around her. The general admiration she receives is explained to her, in the American case, by the children's verse which says:**

**Sugar and spice and everything nice  
Are what little girls are made of.**

**For good measure, the verse concludes with a thorough devaluation of boys:**

**Snakes and snails and puppy dog tails  
That's what little boys are made of.**

**This doctrine is reinforced by the sort of admonitions a girl is usually given: that "boys want only one thing" — the jewel box between her thighs — "and nice girls don't give it to them";<sup>29</sup> that her virginity is precious; that to lose it before marriage is to dishonour the family; that it must be protected by all, and defended, even to their death, by her male relatives. The general message — that she is precious beyond measure — is driven home by the behaviour of mothers and fathers who mount guard over their daughter, jealously protecting their property's value. Now, whose sense of her worth would not be inflated by such fussing? Whose sense of self-preservation would not be made absolute by such protectiveness?**

**A beautiful girl so brought up (and all the others who take her as the model of womanhood) inevitably gets the notion that she must be worth all the gold in the world and more; that she is god's gift to all male humanity. By the time puberty arrives to trigger her nest-making drives, she has already acquired that narcissism which will guide her conduct as maiden, wife, mother, widow and dowager.**

The narcissist personality is what makes a woman take it as a matter of course that a man should offer goods and services to her for her contribution to their joint sexual pleasure. He gives her pleasure, she gives him pleasure, but he pays: to her, that is fair! The narcissist personality is what makes a peasant girl of 15 take it as quite natural that a general or tycoon three times her age should lay all his hard-won power and riches at her feet when he courts her. It does not occur to her to ask if she is worth such tribute: she knows, in her wombsure narcissism, that she is worth much more, that she holds the most precious thing in her suitor's world, and should be paid for it with all that he has in the world. This narcissist personality enables a divorced woman to have no doubt that it is fair for her to collect alimony for services she no longer renders to her ex-husband.

Whereas the mother equips the future dolly bird with a narcissist personality, she equips the future macho with a heroic personality. The hero is a servant who performs extraordinary duties for family, community or humanity: as warrior or protector, as organizer of wealth, or as bringer of vital knowledge. He is, at heart, a sentimental fool who takes great risks, carries out great labours, all in exchange for such vanities as medals, ribbons, statues, and being mentioned in talk and song.

In the course of his training, the future macho is taught to regard women as the weaker sex, to adore dolly birds, and to consider it heroic to provide for and protect his womenfolk. He is also taught that being given a beautiful woman to husband is the most precious reward for heroism. If he is a Fulani or Maasai herdsman in Africa, he learns that lesson from the flogging contests whose victors are rewarded with admiration and love by beautiful maidens. If he will fight and be wounded to earn a wreath; if he will fight and die for posthumous praise; how much more will the macho sacrifice to earn a beautiful bride? It is in this way that he acquires that heroic personality which seeks wealth, honour, power and fame with which to pay for the love of a woman.

This woman-fixated personality makes a macho consider it right and proper for him to give a woman sexual pleasure and pay her too. It prevents a love-smitten general or tycoon from entertaining the thought that the strumpet he is wooing might not be worth one millionth of what he is deliriously offering her for the right to help her put her womb to work.

These two types of personality (heroic macho and narcissist dolly bird) are complementary in serving female power. Narcissism imbues the dolly bird with a sense of her natural right to be worshipped and served by men; heroism imbues the macho with a sense of his natural duty to serve women. She displays the self-confidence and self-centredness appropriate to an absolute ruler; he the self-diffidence and self-sacrifice of a loyal serf. When a boy so trained and a girl so trained do encounter, isn't it obvious who shall rule who?

The time-hallowed channelling of girls to home-making activities, and of boys toward adventure outside the home, is a method whereby the mother, as commandant of the cradle, secures kitchen and cradle power for her girls.

It is kitchenpower that mothers set out to secure for women when they bring up girls to cook, but boys to disdain cooking. As a result, when a boy grows into a macho, he will shun the kitchen, and depend upon his wife to cook for him. And his wife shall then control his stomach. If a man should, nevertheless, learn to cook, and should dispense with the kitchen services of his wife, even his own mother would be unhappy. Consider the story of a Nigerian man who could not even boil an egg at the time his wife walked out on him. Some time later, he invited friends to his home for lunch. According to one of his women guests, the man surprised everybody. Part of the post-prandial conversation went like this:

'Nice meal', I complimented him afterwards. His mum snorted with disapproval. 'Didn't you enjoy the meal?' I asked her.

'Do you think that any woman in her right mind would enjoy bragging about her son's cooking when he should have a wife in the home? The sooner he gets married again, the happier I'll be,' she said sadly.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, as a custodian of female power, the man's own mother would not be happy at his independence, and would want some woman to rule her son's stomach!

Likewise, mothers secure cradle power for their daughters by channelling boys toward adventure and away from childcare duties. Later in life, should a husband try to be more than an occasional cradle assistant to his wife, he would be mocked and henpecked away. Even the militant feminist who insists that house work and baby-minding be

shared by men, when she herself gets down to breeding, wants her man to be no more than a cradle assistant under her supervision. All mothers, feminist or not, know the value of cradle power, and are loathe to relinquish it.

For the magnification of wombpower, mothers primarily rely on female sexual restraint as taught through codes of modesty. Codes which teach a girl coyness; which train her not to take the initiative in sexual encounters; which teach her to defer her gratification for as long as possible, on pain of seeing herself (and being seen!) as sexually forward, loose or even immoral — such training makes a girl more sexually restrained than she would otherwise be. In some cultures, this training is combined with clitoridectomy, an operation which reduces the sexual excitability of a woman. This restraint, regardless of how achieved, gives a woman an enormous advantage in her dealings with sexually deranged men.

Mothers magnify the advantage of female restraint by not teaching boys to restrain their sexual appetites, and even by teaching them to become hopelessly addicted to the female body. Now, weaning is meant to break a child's natural attachment to its mother's milk-bearing teats and warm, comforting body. However, many mothers continue to cuddle their boy children long past weaning time. Some allow them into their beds till they are four years or more. Further training to addict boys to the female body is done quite consciously, not only by mothers, but also by aunts and older girls generally. Consider the following incident.

One evening, in a flat in London, a West Indian woman picked up a 15 month old boy and tried to teach him to kiss. When she first kissed him, the boy made a sour face, and tried to break free from her embrace. The woman, undeterred, kissed him a second time, and then a third time. After the fourth kiss, the boy began to stick out his tongue for more, grinning with delight, and tossing his arms excitedly in the air. After watching this for a while, I asked the woman:

'Aren't you starting him a bit early?'

'Oh no!' she replied. 'The sooner the better actually. After he gets to be thirty, you can't get him this way.'

'Oh!' I said.

In a flash I recognized the motive behind all that hugging and kissing and penis tickling to which small boys are subjected by mothers, aunties, and the admiring women friends of their parents.

A child introduced to carnal pleasures by women's expert hands will be willing, even eager, in adult life, to do anything required of him in order to get what, for him, would have become the greatest reward on earth. The subconscious memory of that addictive pleasure will drive his behaviour long after he attains puberty.

Addiction to the female body weakens a man's powers of sexual abstinence; it puts him into the power of whoever can satisfy his cravings. Just as a heroin addict is in the power of his supplier, and will rob or kill to find money to enrich his supplier, so too will the man addicted to the female body do whatever he finds necessary to get his fix.

Given how great is the male biological drive to secure a womb, one might wonder why women bother to reinforce it with an inculcated addiction to the female body. We ought, perhaps, to ponder the possibility that without this extra addiction, the male might be far less sexually desperate. As any negotiator will tell you, the more desperate your opponent is for what you have, the more unfavourable the terms you could get him to accept. Or, as one woman friend told me: "When it comes to sex, the one who wants it less holds the power." Thus, an addiction which makes a man more desperate for sex increases woman's power over him.

It is by such habits (restraint in the girl; addiction in the boy) which are learned in the cradle, that wombpower, great as it is, is culturally magnified.

Laying the foundations for heroic personality in boys, and for narcissist personality in girls; training children in role models which secure kitchen and cradle power for girls; and teaching children habits which magnify wombpower — these are the basic tasks which are accomplished by and for female power by a boy's mummy dearest. A mother who has raised a macho — a heroic son, strong in physique or intellect, inept in the kitchen and cradle, and disdainful of working in them; a mother who has also raised a dolly bird — a narcissist beauty of a daughter who can restrain her own sexual appetite while coyly whetting desire in men, who shuns adventure but is expert in the kitchen and the cradle; a mother who has raised such offspring and sent them forth into the world for the great mating battle between the sexes — the dolly bird all primed to win, and the macho all primed to lose: that is a mother who has contributed her expected quota to the continuation of female power. Great is her joy, and great too is her honour among women.

## **Part III**

### **Bridepower: In the Cockpit of Courtship**

It's a well-known fact that women are more likely than men to be picky about their romantic partners. Women tend to be more selective in choosing a mate, and they're more likely to break up with a partner if they feel he's not meeting their needs. This is true even when it comes to courtship, which is the process of getting to know someone before committing to a relationship. In fact, women are often described as being "in the cockpit" of courtship, meaning they're the ones driving the relationship forward and making decisions about who to date and how to proceed.

So why do women tend to be more picky in courtship? One reason may be that women have historically been socialized to prioritize their own needs and wants in relationships. They've been taught to value things like emotional intimacy, mutual respect, and equality. These values are often at odds with traditional male behaviors, such as being dominant or controlling. As a result, women may feel uncomfortable or even threatened by men who don't live up to these ideals.

Another factor may be that women tend to be more focused on long-term goals in relationships. They may be looking for a partner who can provide emotional support, financial stability, and a sense of security. Men, on the other hand, may be more interested in short-term goals, such as having fun or experiencing new things. This difference in focus can lead to tension and conflict in courtship.

Women's pickiness in courtship can also be influenced by cultural factors. In some cultures, women are expected to be more passive and less assertive in their追求 of romantic partners. This can make it difficult for women to stand up for themselves and express their needs and wants. It can also lead to feelings of guilt or shame if they appear too aggressive or demanding.

Overall, women's挑iness in courtship is a complex issue that is influenced by many factors. While it's important for both men and women to be open and honest in their interactions, it's also important for women to be assertive and stand up for themselves. By doing so, they can increase their chances of finding a partner who truly respects and values them.

## 4. The Powers of Her Body-beautiful

He may well die for me who has seen my beauty.<sup>31</sup>

— Girls' song from 13th century Portugal.

regular beauty & a smile in the street is just a set-up.<sup>32</sup>

— Ntozake Shange

From puberty onward, nothing disorganizes the male mind more quickly or thoroughly than the sight of the female body-beautiful. It triggers a craving which overwhelms the male's self-protective instincts. His lust provoked, he will gladly crash through a wall of fire, and through thundering ocean waves, to throw himself, panting and out of breath, into the provocative woman's arms. Male susceptibility to female beauty gives women a great leverage in their dealings with men; this leverage is further increased by women's artifice. Their determination to make the female body even more provocative has led to women's preoccupation with that delusive self-beautification which is commonly known as glamour.

Glamour bathes the body with an illusory beauty; its purpose is erotic provocativeness; its function, during courtship, is to arouse a man's aesthetic appetites, and thereby lure him into a trap a woman has set to catch a nest slave. The sexiness of her own body, as enhanced by glamour's tricks, is a woman's frontline weapon in the battle called courtship.

Female codes of alluring self-presentation do vary with fashion and with culture; but their aim is the same — to provoke desire in men and lure them into woman's traps. A woman who packages herself for that purpose, and does so effectively, is said to dress to kill. A woman dressed to kill is not dressed to kill deer, or trees, or pigeons, or other

women (except with envy, of course); she is dressed to kill men. She is dressed for the man hunt; dressed to lure some fool man close enough to plunge her love harpoon into his heart, and having smitten him, to drag him off to her victory parade, and thereafter to her nest.

Consider a Western woman who walks down the street in a painted face and miniskirt, with her bra-less tits tossing about under a see-through blouse. Contrary to the general belief, she is not walking innocently along her way. She is actually a trouble maker, a walking provocation deliberately assaulting the equanimity of men, a huntress in battle gear set to disturb the peace of the male world. In a just world, she would be arrested for (under)dressing to kill. To appreciate that is to understand the folly of men's normal attitude to women's preoccupation with body presentation.

When women discuss their looks, clothes, nail polish, make-up accessories, and things like that, men tend to deride it all: men regard it as evidence of women's vanity and frivolity. When men see a woman fussing about her looks – bringing out her make-up kit in a crowded bus, plucking her eyebrows in a restaurant, touching up the slightest run in her paintwork, or retouching the smudge in her lip gloss; when a woman spends half a day picking out clothes that will have her calculated effect on onlookers; when she puts on stiletto shoes that threaten to dislocate her ankle, just because, she says, they make her legs look nicer, men are usually amused, and shake their heads at female vanity. But such attitudes show just how stupid men really are – for, it is neither vanity nor frivolity which drives women to such a dedicated pursuit of glamour.

Glamour – the artificial beautification of the body for erotic provocativeness – is serious business. When women discuss their appearance, they are talking shop, discussing the tricks of their most important trade. The aim of glamour, like all magic and enchantment, is to confuse the senses of the onlookers, to dull their reason, to induce in them beliefs which the sober mind would dismiss. When a woman arms herself with glamour, and goes looking for her Prince Charming in the swamp of frogs, her objective is to bewitch him out of his senses, so he can blissfully make with her a bargain most unfair to himself, to wit, a marriage contract.

A woman's glamour accessories are some of her most important possessions. That handbag with its mirrors, paintbrushes, paints, ointments, decorator pencils and all – it is her magician's tool box. Have

you wondered why it is about the last thing she will part with, even when she has to rush from a burning room? It is to her what his stethoscope is to the doctor, or his briefcase is to the executive, or his tool kit is to the mechanic. In it are the essential implements of her economic activity — namely, self-beautification for the purpose of luring men to serve her. So, when next you notice, at the end of lunch, a woman rushing off to the powder room; when she returns transformed, with every hair in place, with every patch of colour the correct hue; or when she does her repair job at the luncheon table, in full view of all, do not sneer. Take to heart what Ntozake Shange said about beauty being a set-up, and make sure the set-up does not catch you.

A woman undergoing glamourization is like a warrior kitting himself out for battle. In contemporary Western fashion, she will shave her legs and armpits; wear curlers in her wet hair; smear thick paint on her face, and let it dry and cake on her skin; stuff her feet into tight, high-heeled and ankle-snapping shoes; diet herself into an enervating twiggy slimness; and then set out to seek battle.

After her victim has been hauled home (or rather, after her victim has hauled her off to his home where she shall eat him), many a woman tends to abandon her pursuit of glamour. When the hunt is over, one must pack up and put away one's hunting gear, until it becomes necessary to hunt again. Such a woman ignores her looks, becomes unkempt, gets splendidly fat, turns discourteous, till her bewildered husband wonders if there is any living connection between the demure beauty he wedded and this raggedy harridan he must bear as the cross of his life.

Once upon a time, in London, I heard a British woman talk of having to fetch her flashy dresses out of mothball. When I asked her why, she said that she had to start looking for a new man! The one she once snared using those same clothes had recently gotten away. Her tone was quite businesslike. It was that of a man saying: "It's time to bring out my baits and rods and go down to the stream. It's fishing season again."

Of course, woman's propensity to glamourization exploits man's weakness for the female body-beautiful: if men were not simple-minded dupes who are taken in by dabs of paint and whiffs of perfume, I wonder whether women would so dedicate themselves to glamour. I once teased a Nigerian woman about women's preoccupation with their looks. I suggested that men were far more interested in women's more solid qualities, and that women might do better by cultivating those. She

replied: "It's all well and good to cultivate all those solid qualities; but you first have to attract him, don't you? If you don't, how is he ever going to find out those other qualities?"

Once we remind ourselves that a woman's principal occupation is the winning and holding of at least one male slave; and that her looks are among her primary assets for this business, we must realize that man's condescending attitude to her obsession with her looks is obtuse. Not just obtuse; it is a sign of men's own folly. Would we look down on a hunter who spends time cleaning and oiling his gun; or on a fisherman who lavishes care on his fishing traps; or on any man who is carefully tending the tools of his particular trade? What would we think of a magician who neglected his appearance, or who failed to practice the little tricks he must use to manipulate his audience's attention? A soldier who regards his opponent's weapons with contempt, or who fails to recognize enemy weapons for what they are, risks his own defeat.

Men, clearly, do need protection, both from their own stupidity and from their susceptibility to female beauty. Indeed, one of the best laws ever passed by men, one of the few which male legislators have passed in the male interest, was an Act of the British Parliament of 1770. It said:

All women, of whatever age, rank, profession or degree who shall after this Act, impose upon, seduce, and betray into marriage any of His Majesty's subjects by virtue of scents, paints, cosmetic washes, artificial teeth or false hair, iron stays, bolstered hips, or high-heeled shoes, shall incur the penalty of the law now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanours; and marriage under such circumstances, upon conviction of the offending parties, shall be null and void.<sup>33</sup>

Predictably, like most sensible laws in the male interest, it is not known to have been ever enforced. It was probably a dead letter before it arrived on the statute books. Had it been enforceable, the cosmetics giants of the world would never have built a thriving industry. Nor would the advertising industry daily use the glamorous female body to raid the pockets of men on behalf of vendors of all manner of goods and services.

Among feminists, there are puritan prudes who, in crying down "pornography", object to advertisers' use of the female body-beautiful

on billboards, posters, magazines and television to sell products. They claim that such images "demean women". It is doubtful that images of beautiful and sexy girls demean women. It is probably only the plain Janes and ugly duckling who feel demeaned when they compare themselves with the beautiful images over which men drool and lose their self-control. The truth or falsity of that jealous complaint is for women to sort out among themselves; however, it should be noted that if public displays of images of the female body-beautiful do "demean women", then every woman who displays her own body-beautiful in public places (streets, parties, offices, beaches) also "demeans women". If certain images are to be banned for "demeaning women", so too must every woman's self-display of a similarly provocative sort.

Whatever the feelings of puritan prudes, the stark reality is that the female body-beautiful exercises over men the mighty power of erotic incitement. Advertisers have merely learnt from man-hunting women to use this piece of female witchcraft to derange and rob men. If men were smart enough to act in their own interest, they would seek protection, in both law and custom, from all public display of the female body-beautiful. They would follow the example of the Ayatollah's Iran and ban from streets, beaches, parties and other public gathering places all displays of the female body, especially in cock-teasing outfits and provocative positions. They would ban them, not because the displays "demean women", but because they derange men, bewitch men, and put men's cocks into the manipulating hands of women.

## 5. Love: Male and Female

Love makes men lame and tame.<sup>34</sup>

— The Kiswahili of East Africa.

Love is not blind. It has four eyes; it has night vision; it sees well by day and night.

— Nigerian woman:

Male pundits usually talk as if love had the same effects on women as on men. They seem to overlook the small fact that men and women are not identical but complementary, and that the effect of a current on the opposite poles of a magnet may also be opposite. With a folly typical of those who imagine themselves as the norm, male pundits refuse to heed those few women who have told what love actually does to women; and they insist on projecting unto women what is true only of men. As a result, many famous sayings about love mislead by not indicating that they apply only to men.

For example, according to Ambrose Bierce, love is “a temporary insanity curable by marriage”;<sup>35</sup> for the sake of accuracy, he should have qualified that by the opening phrase “In men.”. Similarly, when Francis Bacon remarked: “It is impossible to love and be wise,”<sup>36</sup> he should have added the opening phrase “For a man.”. Likewise, the saying “love is blind” should be taken as shorthand for “a man in love is blind to his best interests”. None of these remarks applies to women. A woman in love is far from insane; she is anything but unwise or blind to her interests. On the contrary, her first sigh of love is like a whiff of smelling salts which clears her head, leaving her with four eyes and night vision; it instigates her to a ruthless pursuit of what she wants. That woman is indeed most rare for whom love is a beclouder of the eyes or a confuser of the head.

**Love acts on men and women in opposite ways.** To see that, let us compare examples of a man in love and a woman in love. When he was hit by some woman's love harpoon, Willie Carter Spann, nephew of the then US President, Jimmy Carter, put the following advert in a newspaper:

To Susan Lynn: I love you so much I would crawl thru 9 miles of broken glass and razor blades to sniff the truck tires that haul your drawers to the laundry. I would fist-fight a gut-shot polar bear with my hands tied behind my back for a few moments alone with you. I love you, marry me. Willie Carter Spann.<sup>37</sup>

A fellow's mind has to be unhinged to become a geyser of such foolishness! Hopefully, the marriage he was asking for would cure him of his madness.

In contrast to the mush-headedness of the love-smitten man, here is Barbra Streisand's portrait of a woman in love. In her hit song, "Woman in Love", she declared:

I am a woman in love  
And I'll do anything  
To get you into my world  
And hold you within.<sup>38</sup>

Is that not a portrait of a clear-headed huntress, resolute and resourceful? Was there ever a clearer declaration of intent to hunt down and fetter and enslave? Is it any wonder that any man in his right mind would flee from a woman's love like freedom-loving Kunta Kinte from a slave catcher?

To compare Willie Carter Spann with Barbra Streisand is to realize that love is a disease of the heart terrible for man's liberty, but an excellent pep pill for a woman hunting for a slave: when love smites a man, it turns him into a dazed prey; when it possesses a woman, she becomes a clear-eyed, calculating huntress coolly stalking her befuddled prey.

Not only does love act differently on man and woman; the word itself means quite different things to each. When a woman tells a man "I love you", she means "I want you to feed me, house me, clothe me, fuck me,

get me great with child, and take me as your burden until I catch a better slave". This utilitarian view is aptly expressed in a moonlight song by Nigerian maidens in which they describe their lovers as "the axe with which I split wood", then as "the tree that bears money", then as "the key with which I lock my door", then as "the girdle with which I girdle my loins".<sup>39</sup>

In contrast, when a man tells a woman "I love you", he means "I am eager to be your slave, and ready to do everything I can to make you satisfied and happy". Which is why, when a woman hears a man say to her "I love you", her joy is great, for she understands him to mean that he has been knocked out by her chloroform of romance, and she can safely tie him up with social ropes, tether him to her nest with legal chains and, while he is still sprawled out in love's delirium, begin to make a toiling jackass out of him.

The Kiswahili poets are among the few male pundits who have gotten things right: they specify that it is men who are made lame and tame by love. As one of their songs put it: "Love makes men lame and tame". Commenting on that song, Jan Knappert writes:

In a few brief words, the song paints a vivid picture of what happens in the streets of Mombasa in the middle of the night. Painted girls wander about, looking for their prey. Woe unto the man who is caught in their snares by their enticing looks and their luring words. Love covers him like a rash, like shivers of fever. If he is rich, he will ruin himself to please that cheeky little creature; if he is a man of power and influence, he will humble himself for her, there in the open street, to win her favours, and receive little in return except impudent words. The men are like birds caught in a snare, struggling in vain to free themselves.<sup>40</sup>

Given that love makes a man lame and tame, is it any wonder that a woman fires the harpoon of love at a man when they meet in the cockpit of courtship?

A visitor from Mars may be struck by the nonsense which a lovesmitten man utters, and by the eagerness with which an otherwise sensible woman listens to such nonsense. For instance, he will tell a woman that she is the most beautiful woman in the world, and she will give every appearance of believing him. All you need do is look at the ugly duckling to know that she is no such thing, and that not even in her

utmost vanity does she believe the deluded fool. Why then does she pretend to take his gibberish seriously? Well, when he tells her, with a shine in his eyes and heat in his throat, that she is the most beautiful woman in the world, she automatically translates him to mean that he considers her the most beautiful woman in *his* world. That he has been reduced to saying that shows her that he is sufficiently desperate with passion to become like putty in her manipulating fingers. And that, for her, is the vital aspect of the matter.

Another nonsense which is often spouted by love-smitten men, and is eagerly awaited by man-hunting women, is a declaration of everlasting love. *Everlasting?* Now, now, nothing is more absurd than promising to feel love for anybody for ever. No woman in her right mind (and bear in mind that women are quite down-to-earth) believes that a man could feel love for her for ever, or even till death puts an end to his ability to feel love for anything or anybody. Women know the world is full of changes, and that the emotion of love is one of the most ephemeral. So, when a sensible woman craves a declaration of eternal love from a man, and gives every impression of believing it, what really does she understand by it?

A woman mentally translates this foolish man-talk into reasonable talk, and understands it to mean that, in the overcharged state of his psyche, the fellow is ready to promise her anything, even things over which he could have no possible control. This is what makes the statement delicious and exciting to her ears. If he can promise an eternal feeling of love, it means he is ready to pledge himself to do something much more within his control, namely, life-long voluntary servitude to her. Now, if she could only get him to make the latter declaration in public, before suitable witnesses, her man-hunt would be successfully concluded. For then the fellow would be publicly bound to husband (i.e. slave for) her for the rest of his days.

However foolish it may sound, a man's declaration of eternal love works on him like an oath of loyalty: it psychologically binds him to carry out the obligations imposed on him by his love for her. After all, a man is taught to take his oaths rather seriously, especially vows made to his mother or mother-surrogate. Assuming that his training by his mother is effective, he is not likely to abscond from his obligations to her surrogate, not even after the love he felt at the time of the declaration has long evaporated.

When next we find a woman extracting love-struck nonsense from a man, we should not consider her absurd. No woman believes such nonsense literally. She knows perfectly well that they are lies and exaggerations, but they give her proof that he is sufficiently out of his mind to promise her anything, including what she really wants from him: life-long nest slavery. Furthermore, feelings and oaths aside, we must note that, given what a man means by "I love you", his "I'll love you for ever" means "I'll slave for you for ever". And that is surely welcome music to a slave huntress' ears.

A Martian observer might also be amazed that men appear blind to the predatory core of bridal love. As any clear-headed observer can see, between puberty and menopause, a woman is driven by her nesting instinct. For nest-making, she needs the services of a hardworking provider and strong protector. This biological need gives the nest-making woman's love for her chosen man its predatory and exploitative core. It is this uninviting core that the mush of sentimental love is designed to conceal. But conceal from whom? Certainly not from the woman, but rather from her intended victim who might otherwise flee for his dear liberty.

Man, in his sentimentality, may refuse to acknowledge that the love felt for him by the woman who loves him is, at its core, a slaver's love for her slave. Those who doubt that should consider a woman's proverbial reaction to her spurned love, or to a mate who deserts her nest. When she cries "seduced and abandoned", her rage is that of a lioness whose intended dinner has run away. When she cries that her husband has deserted her, her fury is that of a slaveholder whose slave has run away. If he has run off with another woman, her rage at the other woman is that of one slaveholder at another slaveholder who has kidnapped her property. Were men fully conscious of the predatory nature and exploitative purpose of a nesting woman's love for her man, they might be found each day praying: "God save man from the love of woman!" That men do not is a measure of how sentimentality thoroughly beclouds their eyes.

## **6. Courtship: The Hunting of the Love-smitten Man**

**A man always chases a woman until she catches him.<sup>41</sup>**

— Anon.

The courtship scenario is reputedly as follows: boy sees girl, falls in love with her, courts her, wins her, weds her, and triumphantly carries her off to his home to be his housewife (or, in the eyes of some feminists, his domestic servant, resident sextop, childbearer, child rearer, etc.). The reality is, however, rather more like this: girl sees boy and decides to make him her nest-slave. She contrives to attract his attention and to set his heart on fire with a coy glance, a come-hither smile, a painted face, an aloof elegance, the shimmering wriggle of a skirted waist, or a stylish walk that makes her buttocks throb.

When he has been lured to her, and smitten with love for her, the courtship starts in earnest. She puts him through an obstacle course where he must prove to her satisfaction that he will be a competent and loyal nest-slave. If he should pass her eligibility tests for economic ability, nest defence capability, emotional loyalty, sexual loyalty, etc.; and if she has no better candidate within reach, she accepts his application for the job of her nest-slave. She then stages a public display of his enslavement to her, packs into his home, turns it into her nest, and becomes its queen and his boss. In accomplishing all this, the woman is like a judo artist who uses the aggressiveness of the man to bring him down. That is why the perceptive say that a man always chases a woman till she catches him.

However decorous it may all seem, courtship is not bliss but battle — a battle to break the free male into a loyal slave. Courtship is a nest-making rite whose ground rules are dictated by the female interest. Its length, complexity and general structure are determined by her need to hunt a virile male, catch him, break his free spirit, and attach him to

herself as provider for, and protector of her nest. If courtship were organized in the male interest, it would be a quick game of kidnap, rape and escape; but because it is organized in the female interest, it is an elaborate game of slave-breaking, with the woman as bronco-buster.

To see these matters clearly, we must look at courtship in its most revealing contexts. In a society where marriages are arranged, much of the eligibility testing is done by parents, or guardians, or other go-betweens, who have studied the families and the persons they intend to bring together. Furthermore, things like emotional loyalty and economic commitment do not have to be established before the wedding. There is a social structure which will hold the marriage together while these are slowly established after the wedding; and there are mediators to ensure that the expected duties are, in the meantime, carried out. Such supporting structures can hinder insight into the core of the courtship process.

In a society where marriages are not arranged (such as urban, middleclass America), it is easier to see the central dynamic of courtship. With minimum support from social structures, the woman endeavours, on her own, to find and hunt down the man, break his spirit, and train him for his nest-slave duties *before* the wedding day. This is why modern American courtship offers what may well be the best opportunities for grasping the basics of courtship.

Before the sexual and feminist revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, the lone ranger American huntress was helped by the fact that her intended victim had been brought up to believe that the marriageable woman should be approached like a goddess perched on a lofty pedestal of chastity. She was to be seen, swooned over, worshipped, craved and laboriously wooed before she could be touched sexually.

While wooing her, the man submitted to an exhausting, frustrating, heart-aching obstacle course. He had to pace his effort, and win her consent in stages marked by gifts: so many roses for a peck on the cheek; so many dates (outings, picnics, dinners and movies) for a first hug; so many more for a lip kiss; then a pin to secure for him the privilege of light petting; then an engagement ring to bar her from being wooed by other men; and, at last, a wedding to publicly confer on him the privilege to make use of her womb.

To make the obstacle course seem worthwhile to the poor man, a rainbow of happiness-ever-after was painted at the end of it all. He

would enter this paradise of eternal bliss at their honeymoon, from the moment he received the gift of her priceless virginity. He was made to believe that, as she wandered through a forest of marauding pricks, she valiantly preserved for him her vaunted virginity: she would, on their wedding night, present it to him as a unique gift to his victorious manliness.

The cunning of it all is stunning! Imagine a hunt in which the huntress takes on the appearance of the prey; in which the true prey enjoys the illusion that he is the hunter; in which he is made to exert himself, alternately suffering pangs of disappointment and spells of exhilaration, while the huntress leads him, step by wily step, into her well-laid trap. And even after she has closed the trap over him, tied him up, and led him off to slave for her, she does not neglect to confirm him in his illusion that he has been the hunter. Still exploiting his hunter psychology, she lays herself out on his wedding bed, and acts the prey surrendering her irreplaceable hymen to his body spear. After plunging it into the prostrate "victim", he glories in his bloodied spear, like a hunter would after slaying a mighty beast. Well, has a more exquisite game of cunning ever been invented?

The structure and dynamic of courtship is dictated by the fact that it is a selection, bargaining and taming process all rolled into one. As a selection process, the cardinal question that must be answered to the nesting woman's satisfaction is this: Can this candidate husband my nest the way I want? That is why a courtship is conducted as a job interview in which he must demonstrate his suitability for the job she is offering.

The bargain she wants to strike with the selected candidate is this: he agrees to build, maintain and protect her nest, and to supply it with victuals; she, in return, permits him to contribute his sperm to the making of babies in her womb. Once it is understood that he is to pay with nest duties for the great privilege of inseminating her, the power position in courtship becomes clear: she, who holds the priceless womb, is the boss, and he is merely a suitor for a great favour.

In taming her suitor she aims to turn him into her loyal nest-slave. As women and all slave holders know, if a slave has just been captured from his original state of liberty, his free spirit has to be broken, and his loyalty has to be attached to his owner, otherwise he will not wear the yoke easily.

Courtship, therefore, is a combat zone where a woman seeks to establish power over her prospective husband. The point is not to

decide whether the woman shall rule the man, but simply how; for if the woman should lose out in the power play, the courtship will be aborted, and fail to reach marriage.

The length of a courtship depends on how long it takes the boss to make up her mind about the candidate's suitability, on how long it takes to tame and habituate him to her domination, and on how long it takes to conclude the bargain.

Let us first examine the job interview aspect of courtship. The principal job she needs done by her husband will be economic. He must supply the income to run her nest, especially if she herself is not wealthy; and even if she is wealthy, he will have to manage her wealth. Therefore, her first concern is to administer an economic eligibility test on the suitor.

If the man's social standing is obvious, the test is not difficult to conduct. Where his social standing is not obvious, and she has to find things out for herself, she does so with professional thoroughness.

In urban, middle class America, the preliminary economic interview is the stuff of cocktail encounters. The man is asked: "What do you do?" If he gives an easily interpreted answer (for example, if he says he is a doctor, lawyer, banker, stockbroker, or high executive in a major corporation), then that part of the interview is quickly concluded. If he says he is a welder, bus driver, factory foreman or something like that, that also settles the matter. Either way, the woman has a fair estimate of what she is really after: How much does he earn, and what assurance is there that he will continue to earn at least that much? Sparks may, however, fly if the woman cannot interpret the man's economic standing from his answer, as in this true life exchange:

'What's your name?'

'Jerry.'

'Mine's Sybil. What d'you do?'

'I talk, I drink, I dance, I ogle girls. I have fun'.

'How do you support yourself?'

'Very well, thank you.'

'I mean, on what?'

**'On my two feet, thank you.'**

**'How do you pay your rent?'**

**'That takes care of itself, thank you.'**

**'Where d'you get your money?'**

**'From the bank, thank you.'**

**'Are you independently wealthy?'**

**'As opposed to dependently poor?'**

**'Really, are you independently wealthy?'**

**'Wait a minute! What's this? When did you earn the right to ask these questions? Look! I hardly know you. We've just met!'**

**'Forget I asked.'**

**'I will, thank you.'**

**'Where did you go to school?'**

**'Here, there and everywhere.'**

**'Why are you so damn secretive? What do you have to hide?'**

**'Why all these personal questions? Weren't you ever taught the art of conversation? This is a party, for heaven's sake, not an interrogation center.'**

**'I like you. I'd like to get to know you. You don't see me taking an interest in others here, do you?'**

**'Gee thanks! Thanks a million! I suppose I'm supposed to feel flattered.'**

**'You make it sound like there's something wrong for a woman to take an interest in a man.'**

'No! There's nothing wrong in that. But I wish you didn't take that kind of interest in me. It is like all you want is my financial report, my social pedigree! You might be better off, actually, talking to my accountant, or to my trust fund manager. Look, I came here to dance, to have a good time, to maybe get laid. I certainly didn't come here to have my wallet sized up. You haven't asked me what I like to do right here and now. There's good music going, good food on the table, good wine flowing. But you haven't asked me if I'm a good dancer, or a good fuck. You haven't suggested anything one might do at a party to have fun. All you seem to be interested in is whether I'd make a good catch or something like that.'

'Boy oh boy! All you men have a one track mind! All men ever want is to fuck, fuck, fuck! Screw every skirt you can lift up, and then scram! Wham, bam, thank you maam! That's if you wait long enough to say that!'

'Hey! Men have a one track mind? And women don't? All you women ever seem to want is a catch. If you've got one already, you're looking for a better catch. If you don't have one, you're hunting for one. If men have a one track mind, so do women: it is just that their minds are on different tracks. Anyway, I won't allow you even a peek into my wallet. So there!'

'Why are you so selfish?'

'Selfish? Any more selfish than you? Tell me: if some stranger came up to you and, first thing, said: "Hi! Are you a good fuck?", how would you feel?'

'I'd say he was being rude. Extremely fresh. I'd say that was none of his business.'

'Exactly. I'm saying to you that you are being extremely rude. My finances are none of your business. You haven't earned the right to poke your nose into my wallet or checkbook.'

'Excuse me! I was only trying to be friendly.'

'Really? With friendliness like that, who would not cuddle a shark?'

Encounters like that, in which the man spurns her test, are most rare. Usually, the man is so flattered by her attention, so keen to slip in between the thighs of an interested woman, that he eagerly submits to her "friendly" interrogation. He is even likely to boastfully exaggerate his economic condition. But in the above encounter, the woman probably stumbled against a man who was tired of being hunted. As F. Scott Fitzgerald once noted, "Every young man with a large income leads the life of a hunted partridge".<sup>42</sup> One can understand how such a partridge might eventually rebel and refuse to cooperate with even the preliminary phase of being hunted.

Where a man passes the woman's economic eligibility test (by his answers, or through such items of male status display as his clothes, car, house, etc.), she might then test his abilities as a nest-protector. Does he have military or paramilitary experience? Is he followed about by a retinue of musclebound bodyguards? If not, she may provoke a brawl and incite him to show whether, and how well, he would defend her nest (and her good self) from attack.

Women who go for brawlers, bouncers, soldiers, policemen, high officials of state, or tycoons are reflecting their need for a nest-protector. In unsettled times, this need may become paramount. For instance, during the unsettled 1960s and 1970s in the USA, quite a few high placed women married their bodyguards. Lynda Bird Johnson, daughter of President Johnson, married Charles S. Robb, a US Marine Corps Captain, who had served as a White House aide. Susan Ford, daughter of President Ford, married Charles F. Vance, a secret service agent assigned to the unit protecting the Ford family. Perhaps the most prominent example from that era was the media heiress Patty Hearst, who ditched her fiance, Steve Weed, after he had, like a weed, failed to protect her from being kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army. She went on to marry Bernard Shaw, a bodyguard hired to protect her following her traumatic experiences.

If the man's abilities as economic provider and nest-protector satisfy the woman, she may start to tame him by securing three essential commitments from him: sexual commitment, emotional commitment, and economic commitment. Of these, economic commitment is central.

The applicant must be taught to habitually devote his earnings to maintaining her nest and herself. All other feeders at his trough must be banished; those not banishable (like his parents, siblings, relatives and close friends), will have their access to his income minimized. If he

is the generous type, his impulse must be curbed, and he must be trained, if need be, to hand his pay packet directly to her each payday. As part of his economic training, a not-so-rich man might be required to give up smoking, drinking and gambling, and any other "vice" through which he might "fritter away" his income. But where the man is suitably rich, she may be content simply to train him to spend most of his income on her good and lovely self.

She also makes a point of training him to be sexually loyal to herself. This is partly to minimize the risk of losing his economic commitment to her. As she well knows, male-female attachments are notoriously vulnerable to better sex. Should she fail to fix his roving eye on herself, or fail to tie down his wandering lust, he might become sexually addicted to another woman after some chance encounter. A woman who grabs his balls away from her could then grab his purse away too.

For securing a man's sexual loyalty, a woman's main ruse is to get him sexually addicted to herself, whether by heavy petting that doesn't go all the way, or by full and abundant sex. Once hooked, he is never let out of her sight, except when he goes off to work, lest some chance encounter with another woman should break her spell on him. The man-minder part of this ruse has been perfected by American women under the guise of an insistent and loving "togetherness". In the name of "togetherness", she encourages him to come directly home from work, to stop going out with "the boys", and to go with her wherever he has to go outside working hours. In effect, she makes herself his chaperone, ostensibly because of her great love which could not bear any separation! In fact, of course, it is so that, arm in arm together everywhere, she can keep a jailer's eye on his genitalia. Ah, togetherness, lovely togetherness!

To secure his emotional commitment, a woman will train a man to attach his feelings inseverably to herself. His jealousy and her cantankerousness are great instruments for this task. The more jealous she makes him, the more strongly the heat of his own jealousy bonds his heart to her. In inciting his jealousy to incandescence, a woman's ways can be quite bizarre. She might deliberately encourage the attentions of rival suitors. If he gets jealous enough to fight them off, all is well; if he doesn't, his emotional attachment to her is judged insufficiently strong, and further inciting is required. But should he, in a fit of high jealousy, beat her up after chasing off the rivals she encouraged, she has excellent proof that he could not bear to lose her.

Similarly, by her cantankerousness, she aims to test if he will stomach anything rather than leave her. She will play hard to get; she will insult and humiliate him; she will require him to flatter her to the point of irrationality. If he abandons his courtship in frustration or annoyance, she might tell herself that "faint heart never won fair lady". Translation: his passion is not strong enough to weather the harassments and disappointments of nest-service; therefore, good riddance!

A fine demonstration of this situation occurs in Jorge Amado's novel *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*:

The trifler's interest must have been very slight to grow discouraged at the first stumbling block. Dona Flor had done much worse things to Pedro Borges when she was single. The student from Para had savoured the bitterness of letters returned, gifts rejected, real insults, and he with an engagement ring in his pocket. That was a true passion, not this one which evaporated with the mere slamming of a window.<sup>43</sup>

Thus it is that, if a woman's behaviour during courtship seems mad, seems arbitrary to the point of tyranny, there is a simple purpose to it all: to establish and test her power over him. The suitor must be reduced to unquestioning obedience to her, otherwise her hold on him, on which the security of his nest services will depend, might prove tenuous. After all, a slave master must break his slave thoroughly if he is to expect loyal and unquestioning service during the slave's lifetime.

If the suitor's commitment to her has been found satisfactory in the vital areas, she then has to get him to propose, thereby signalling his eagerness to begin slaving for her. If he is not already on his knees, blabbering with impatience, he must be reduced to that position, and then hauled off to the altar where he shall publicly accept the standard contract between nest-queen and nest-slave.

For getting him to propose, a woman has many weapons at her disposal — lust, love, romance and motherly care. She can addict the suitor to her body (lust); or afflict his heart with deep tenderness toward her (love); or make him lose his head over her (romance); or accustom him to the comforts of a well-ordered home (motherly care). Each weapon is aimed at some suitably vulnerable part of his being. Romance aims at his head, to befuddle it and disarm his common sense; lust aims at his nerves, to train them to rush to her body for calming dips; love aims at his feelings, to make her the preferred object over which to

discharge his tender feelings; motherly care aims at his enjoyment of physical comforts, such as he once enjoyed in his mother's nest. For each of these weapons, a book of tactics could be written by observing the behaviour of women. However, let us consider here only some of the tactics of lust and motherly care.

To soften up a man to the point where he proposes, a woman can either withhold sex from him or lavish it on him. In the sex-lavishing tactic, the woman gives him sex, quite readily and freely, till he is addicted and can no longer do without his regular dose. Then, like an expert drug dealer, she can make him pay any price for what she supplies. And her asking price? A trip to the marriage altar. A woman who uses this tactic tends to lose all interest in sexually servicing her husband soon after the wedding. This phenomenon gave rise to the following joke in San Francisco: "How do you make an Irish woman frigid? Marry her!"

The sex-withholding tactic was much favoured before contraceptives became commonly available. It is probably as old as the missionary position, if not older. It is still favoured by diehard puritans who regard sex-before-the-wedding as a mortal sin. The aim is to frustrate the man to the point where he becomes obsessed with having sex with the woman. Claiming that she is not a cheap woman, she proves her costliness by not yielding her alleged virtue for anything less expensive than marriage. At its most bizarre, the hapless fellow gets conned into her way of seeing things, into her way of defining virtue, and joins her in regarding readily available sex as "cheap", as devalued by the very ease with which it could be had. When converted to her frustration theory of value, he values her even more for her very refusal to have sex with him. He can become so obsessed with her that, in terminal frustration, he capitulates and accepts her terms for sleeping with him, namely, a wedding! The pop band, Meatloaf, has expertly parodied this tactic in the song "Paradise by the Dashboard Lights".

This tactic was much helped by the cult of virginity which venerated the virgin bride. She held out, it was claimed, in order to give him the honour and pleasure of receiving her with her hymen intact! In practical terms, the poor sod was sex-starved into buying unsampled goods. If the sex turned out lousy, or if her frigidity ruined the honeymoon, or if her vaunted virginity proved to be fake, tough luck for the hapless chap. The woman would by then have filed her title to his labours at the court registry or the church altar. There being no refund clause in the marriage contract, he could not ask for release from his sworn obliga-

tions to his new boss, no matter how lousy she proved in bed, no matter if she proved incapable of bearing children.

The motherly care tactic is based on the christianly notion that she who would be your queen, let her be your house servant. Accordingly, the woman maneuvers to take over her suitor's cooking, house cleaning and house keeping. Her opening gambit is to relieve him of the chore of cooking for himself. She will tell him that he will feed better on her cooking than on his, and will march into his kitchen to prove it. If the bachelor has no kitchen of his own, and depends on eating out, she is not daunted. She will offer to cook for him at her own kitchen. Should he try to resist, excuses will spring readily to her honeyed tongue. Ah, the cost of eating out! Or she will complain that there are no places to go for a decent bite after midnight, or after whatever hour the local eateries shut down. She will persist until she has him feeding off dishes she herself has prepared.

That opening move accomplished, she will contrive to have them live together in his house or hers. The ostensible objective is to see if things will work out, if they can share each other's company for long without suffering cabin fever. Or it is simply to save the inconvenience of commuting from one dwelling to the other. Once they move in together, she gives him the VIP treatment. She showers him with smiles at every opportunity; she covers herself in glamour from waking up in the morning to bedtime at night; she offers him meals when he wants them, where he wants them, even serving him breakfast in bed, and even spooning the delicacies into his watering mouth, should he as much as hint at wanting that pleasure. She will darn his socks, sew on his missing buttons, mend his shirts, wash and iron his clothes, fetch his slippers, and even give him a nightly bath if he as much as hints that he did enjoy such treatment from his mother. She will do all the shopping and bar him firmly from the kitchen. She will pamper him even more than he ever was pampered when he was his mother's precious brat. She will persevere with this plan till she gets him used to not cooking for himself, to not cleaning his house, to not taking care of himself. She will persevere till the fool begins to imagine how wonderful it would be if this could go on for ever; till the mad fool begins to believe that this cosy life would continue for ever if only he married her!

If he does not get down on his knees fast enough to suit her schedule, she will start giving him hints, subtle at first, then more loudly later on. If he still is slow, she might suddenly take off to visit some aunt she's

never visited in her life, some aunt she had never talked of before, but who conveniently lives on the far face of the moon. The man, by now helpless, cannot stand the prospect of doing without her, for even an afternoon, let alone for the weeks she would need to travel to see her most cherished aunt. What is the now dependent fellow going to do? Crisis! He begs her not to go. But she goes off anyway. And the moment she returns (following periodic phone calls to hear how inadequately he is coping without her), it would be a miracle if even a court injunction, or an order from his employer, would keep him from falling on his knees and proposing to marry her at once.

Of course, these weapons, and the tactics for using them, are usually wielded in combination, depending on the skill of the man-hunting woman. They are normally adequate to bring even the wildest, freedom loving bronco of a man to his obedient knees. Sometimes they do fail, and the woman has to resort to rough tactics.

Before the sexual revolution undermined it, one of the most popular of rough tactics was the shotgun wedding. This worked best, of course, if the woman had lavished sex on the suitor. All it then took was to surreptitiously get herself pregnant. If he did not then capitulate, if he didn't offer to slave for the nest to which he had already contributed his genes, her father and brothers would arrive with their shotguns and march "the prisoner" to the altar. In these times, when there is no premium on unbroken hymens, shotgun weddings have declined in frequency. Without the cult of the virgin bride, shotgun weddings lose their rationale: it was that, having damaged their daughter's or sister's worth by breaking her hymen, the fellow had to hold on to the goods he had damaged.

Other tactics, a bit less rough, are still available to the woman who wants to hurry her suitor to propose. She can end his reluctance by hinting at, or even producing, rivals to whom his ego would be loathe to lose her. When such a woman seems determined to flirt with other men in her suitor's presence, her game is clear. A particular white American variant of this is for the girl to show keen interest in some black male in the presence of her dithering suitor. This triggers her suitor's racism into action, and he moves to save white womanhood from the defiling clutches of nigger erotomania. And he saves it by promptly marrying her!

From such examples, the dispassionate observer cannot but be impressed by the woman's superior position in courtship, and by the cleverness with which she uses her weapons. While the fool man imagines himself the aggressive, powerful hunter tracking some weak prey, she hunts him down and carts him off.

It might be wondered why men do not usually tell the truth about courtship. Why don't fathers, and perhaps grandfathers, warn young men about it? Well, male pride for one. The hunting code requires a man to crow from the rooftops about his victories, not his defeats. This means that no husband will be eager to admit that he was tricked, and defeated, and enslaved by his little wife. Secondly, those men who have an interest in declaring the truth, the successful career bachelors, are very few. And even if they bothered to tell the truth, how many men would believe them? The reputation which women have woven for them (as inadequate, undesirable failures whom no woman would marry) would prevent them from being believed. To those conditioned to believe that being a husband is the natural, god-ordained, and happy destiny of every man, a bachelor's account of the perils of courtship would sound like sour grapes.

Thirdly, a sense of futility contributes to men's silence on the topic. When they consider all the men who fell into women's traps all through the ages, those who might be tempted to warn others are driven to despair. What's the use? Driven by his craving for progeny, the average man, forewarned or not, would still fall where his betters fell.

## 7. Wedding: The Bride's Triumph Ceremony

O bride, how happy you are!

Lala shebo!

You have found a hard worker!

Lala shebo!<sup>44</sup>

— Song of Village Girls of Ethiopia.

According to some feminists, a wedding ushers a woman into that prison, that house of domestic slavery, that vale of misery which is marriage. As one of them has put it, marriage is “the hardest way on earth of getting a living”<sup>45</sup> — which would, presumably, make it harder than plantation slavery! Another feminist, Sue Bruley, has said of it:

Someone coming from another planet and looking at a marriage contract and the semi-slavery it entails for the woman would think it insane that she should enter into it voluntarily.<sup>46</sup>

If weddings ushered women into semi-slavery, into the hardest way on earth of getting a living, women would, indeed, be mad to enter it voluntarily. That women do enter it, not just voluntarily, but eagerly, suggests that either women are daft or they are not the ones enslaved by marriage. Since women are the more down to earth and sensible of the two sexes, one must conclude that this talk of slavery is pure feminist propaganda. In fact, a look at the realities, including the actual behaviour of men and women, would give the lie to the feminist claim.

If indeed weddings ushered women into exploitation and hardship, why is it that the bride can be counted upon to appear for her wedding looking radiant and joyfully expectant? Why do bridal songs celebrate her happiness? If a bride is judged happy by women because she has found a hard worker (as is stated in the Ethiopian song quoted above),

who then is going to be exploited in the subsequent marriage – the hard worker or his owner?

Of course, the bride is happy because the wedding is her triumph ceremony marking the end of her man hunt, marking the beginning of her retirement on the earnings of her husband. She has spotted a suitable male, and disorganized him with the effects of her body-beautiful. She has sparked in him a craving for her womb. She has smitten him with love, put him through the obstacle course of courtship, broken his wild spirit, attached his emotions to herself, and taught him his commitments and duties. She has gotten him to propose, and is about to bring him before the public to accept to be her nest-slave. Why should she not be happy after such a successful campaign? Why should she not be radiant at the prospect of her fine reward – to live on his earnings for the rest of her days?

If she is less than perfectly happy on her wedding morning, there are usually two main reasons. First, of course, is that she now has to leave her parents and friends and set out for that new abode where she shall make her nest. Parting from one's home cannot be entirely joyful for anyone. But its sorrows are nothing compared with the joy of, at last, having her own nest. The balance of any mixed feelings she might have are on the side of leaving her mother's nest for her own. As a "Song of Bridesmaids" from Rwanda says:

We did not do it to you,  
We did not want to see you go;  
We love you too much for that.  
It's your beauty that did it,  
Because you are so gorgeous...  
Ah, we see you laugh beneath your tears!  
Good-bye, your husband is here  
And already you don't seem  
To need our consolations...<sup>47</sup>

The second reason for any unhappiness on her wedding morning is anxiety that the true picture of his future condition might have penetrated the bridegroom's befuddled mind. What if he should then fail to turn up at the celebration of his own defeat? And what if he showed up, but balked at saying his "I do!" before the assembled witnesses? Consider the following news reports:

Antonio Iorillo giggled when the priest asked: 'Do you take this woman for your wedded wife?' Then he said: 'No.' There was pandemonium in the little church at Santa Maria Goretti, Italy. The bride sobbed and one bridesmaid fainted. Hastily the bridegroom explained that he was only joking, and asked the priest to continue the service. 'You have committed sacrilege,' the priest told him. 'Only a bishop can put things right.' Fortunately, the bishop was an understanding man. He told the priest to go on with the ceremony, which was delayed for more than two hours.

There was a shorter hitch at a Suffolk wedding when a nervous bridegroom became tongue-tied just when he should have said 'I will.' The bride, a hefty woman, nudged him and muttered: 'Say "I will," you fool,' and her partner blurted out, parrot-fashion: 'I will, you fool.'<sup>48</sup>

In each case, what gives any bride anxieties had happened; luckily, disaster was averted, and all ended well for each bride.

The reactions to these balking bridegrooms reveal that it is the woman who is all set to exploit the man in their post-wedding life. Would the Italian bride have sobbed, or would her bridesmaid have fainted in sympathetic shock, if women looked forward to being enslaved in marriage? Wouldn't the bride, and her bridesmaid, have rejoiced at her fortuitous escape from a terrible future? As for the Suffolk bride, she reacted with the decisiveness of an alert slave-owner who thwarts the escape bid of a slave she is buying. So much for feminist disinformation about who is set to be exploited within marriage.

Any intelligent man who plays participant observer at his own courtship realizes that he is being tricked, cajoled, bullied and prick-twisted into staying the course. He realizes that the wedding, in which he is about to play his bit part, is simply a public celebration of his own defeat, and of his bride's victory, in the great battle of courtship. He will recognize that the wedding is a public triumph where, like a victorious Roman general, his bride will parade him as the captive from her manhunt. He will recognize the non-reciprocal (and inequitable) terms of the contract which the officiating priest will ask him to consent to, especially those clauses which require him to share with the bride all his wealth and the fruits of his toil, but which do not ask her to do likewise. Any wonder then that an observant and intelligent man would balk at saying his "I will"? Anyway, who in his right mind and full liberty

would attend a parade which advertises his capitulation? Any wonder some bridegrooms just don't show up? Don't some defeated generals commit suicide to spare themselves the ignominy of being paraded in their vanquisher's triumph? Any wonder why that Suffolk bridegroom who couldn't stay away (like a general whose captors did not give him a chance to disembowel himself, or to bite on his cyanide pill) was far from enthusiastic at the ceremony? Perhaps the true significance of a wedding dawned on him too late, probably right there at the altar, and he took fright, and got tongue-tied!

Balking bridegrooms, and those who go AWOL (Absent Without Leave) from their weddings, recognize that a wedding is not a triumph for the man. But most men either are too daft to recognize that, or are too intimidated to do anything about it.

What, it may be asked, about brides who bolt from their own weddings? That does happen, but it is most rare. In societies where marriages are not arranged, it is rare because, as the employer, the bride calls the shots, and settles only for the best available candidate. She does not agree to any wedding unless she is sure the bridegroom is the best available to her. But when she does bolt from her own wedding, it is usually because she has spied a much better prey, perhaps a previous lover with whom she had lost touch, who suddenly turns up and indicates that he is available. Where marriages are arranged, a bride bolts from her own wedding if a man she finds revolting is being forced upon her by her parents or guardians. In that case, her action is a rebellion against parental insensitivity or tyranny rather than a manifestation of fear of enslavement within marriage.

To avoid incidents of balking, tongue-tied or no-show bridegrooms, some societies have built into the wedding process rituals like bride-snatching. Bride-snatching is designed to reassure the bridegroom that he is the victor in the courtship battle; it confirms his feeling that he has been the hunter, and that the bride is his prize. According to psychological experts:

(The wedding ritual) is essentially a woman's initiation rite, in which a man is bound to feel like anything but a conquering hero. No wonder we find, in tribal societies, such counter-phobic rituals as the abduction or rape of the bride. These enable the man to cling to the remnants of his heroic role at the very moment that he must submit to his bride and assume the responsibilities of marriage.<sup>49</sup>

Such counterphobic rituals are a tribute to the profound disquiet which the prospect of marriage, and of his sworn duties within it, provokes in the intelligent male. It also shows the lengths to which the male administrators of the female interest will go in devising con games that will trick a man into accepting his own enslavement.

The sensible male (and any fair person) has to admit that the bridegroom is the one person with every reason to be unhappy at a wedding. Everyone else is usually genuinely happy—the bride, the officiating priest, the parents of the bride, the bridesmaids and other hopeful brides-to-be, the groom's parents, and the merrily feasting guests. They have good reason too! The married women, like generals who have had their own triumphs, are glad to welcome another to their ranks. The unmarried women are having their hopes renewed, with each probably thinking: "If that silly girl can get herself a slave, so will I, sooner or later." The married men are there to enjoy the discomfiture of yet another lad: after all, misery loves company! In any case, why should they be unhappy at a feast? As for the unmarried men, the fools among them are hoping to be next in line for what they have been taught is bliss; while the worldly wise are rejoicing that it wasn't them this time. They probably say to themselves: "Another sod bites the dust, but I'm still free!"

And thus it is that a wedding is a grand and heartless conspiracy against the bridegroom. Poor fellow! As he leads his bride home and shows her off, you can guess why that radiant smile shines from her face. You can imagine the woman in her (what Virginia Woolf called the "Angel in the House") popping up in her head and singing the victory song of bridepower:

Now the hunt is over;  
The prey is in your net.  
Show his head to the cheering crowd  
And flash your victory smile.

You can almost read the thoughts in her mind as she hugs and kisses him in front of the wedding guests: "Poor fool, I caught you at last! You may think you are stronger; you may think you are cleverer; you may think whatever nonsense makes you feel good, but you are now my official nest-slave! And if ever you try to escape, all of society, all these people who have witnessed this day, will restrain you."

Which is why a woman who won't enter into marriage without a wedding knows precisely what she is after. She knows what insurance she is insisting on obtaining against possible desertion by her soon-to-be-over-exploited nest-slave.

## **Part IV**

### **Wifepower: In the Nest of His Own Matriarch**

## 8. The Husband Managers

**It is only stupid women who cannot command men.<sup>50</sup>**

— Marie Corelli

**The male is a domestic animal which, if treated with firmness and kindness, can be trained to do most things.<sup>51</sup>**

— Jilly Cooper

**I have a manager: officially, they call her my wife.**

— A London man at a Brixton Fair, 1989.

**Now she has married him, moved into his house, and settled down to manage her “hard worker”. Husband management, the grand preoccupation of wifepower, has as its prime objectives:**

- a) to keep the husband productive of enough wealth, status, power, fame, etc. as will satisfy the wife’s own ambitions; and
- b) to keep him from running away, however harrowingly she exploits him.

**To achieve these aims, a wife brings all her skills in manipulation.**

**In the art of managing men, rare is the male Caesar who can match the average girl of seventeen. Girls learn it by observation, or through conversation with their mothers or aunts, or during initiation rites in those societies which still practice them. The result is that, by puberty, if not before, the average girl can manipulate a situation so as to receive as gifts whatever she desires, even without explicitly asking for them. This skill, which she is ready to use on her male slave, demonstrates a much higher order of managerial craft than order-barking prefects, captains, generals, presidents, tycoons and other male-style com-**

manders ever attain. After marriage, she keeps her skills sharpened through refresher courses, alias kaffee klatches or gossip sessions, where women talk what, for them, is serious shop.

To the management of her husband, a wife brings the highest possible professionalism. If the essence of professionalism (in contrast to amateurism) is in doing what one is doing for monetary or other economic reward and not for fun; at as high a level of skill as is possible; and with a singleness of purpose that is intolerant of distraction or frivolity—then it is in husband management that women show the highest professionalism. Indeed, compared to a career wife, the so-called career woman of today (who wears a suit, carries a briefcase, commutes to an office daily, does her nine-to-five stint, and hurries home in the evening rush hour) is not a professional at all, but a high dabbler on the turf of professional men; for when the going gets tough, any but the hardiest of these tomboys is liable to quit and concentrate on her marriage.

Once the nest slave has been brought home, the poor fellow is managed ruthlessly. He is given his assignments and made to perform them. He is routinely henpecked and spied on. If he is particularly recalcitrant, he is threatened with starvation, with loss of peace of mind, or with loss of sexual privileges. He is subjected to the full force of what some Nigerian husbands call bedroom terrorism. The weapons of the bedroom terrorist range from those of agitators to those of assured rulers. The repertory includes praise, blame, flattery, guilt tripping, nagging, putting in the wrong, sex strikes, the big and the little lie, the silent withdrawal of approval, the ruthless manipulation of male insecurities and fears, the shattering of fragile egos, incitement to rivalry, misinformation, disinformation, deliberate confusion and disorientation.

In using these weapons to get whatever she wants out of her husband, a wife has the support of her professional colleagues — her circle of female friends and relatives. They act as her spy network, informing her of her husband's activities when he is out of her sight. And in their kaffee klatches, where they gather to natter about how to run their husbands, they teach one another how to make any intractable husband's life so hot a hell that he would prefer to toe the line laid down by his wife.

The wives of elite men are, of course, the best husband managers. These are the *grandes dames* or grand matriarchs who expertly manage the foremost male managers of vast organizations. They are the type

referred to when, at testimonial dinners, it is said that behind every successful man there is a woman. But what, it may be asked, does such a woman do to her man from behind?

As we all know, behind every successful boxer, athlete or pop star is a trainer/manager. Likewise, the wife behind a successful man is his trainer/manager. She drives him on like a charioteer drives a horse that is pulling him along. In her hands she holds the reins of criticism and admiration, of sexual rewards and punishment; with these she controls his ego and guides his efforts. She also has at her disposal the entire set of social arrangements, cultural values and psychological forces which, for millennia, have been organized for the exercise of wifepower. These include the facade of patriarchy, the double standard, man's fear of woman, man's silly soul which is full of sentimental illusions, their almighty baby, and man's fear of divorce. In using these tools and resources of husband management, an elite wife is a pastmaster (pastmistress?) among women.

Given such mastery, it is no wonder that elite wives are wont to maintain that men are babies — naive, ignorant, bragging, hard-working, oversize babies; and that any woman worth her tears can manage any man. In this, elite wives differ from most feminists; the latter tend to be bewildered and inexpert at man-management, either because they escaped a thorough grounding in traditional female arts of man-management, or because they are contemptuous of such arts. To the discerning observer, the assurance with which elite wives manage their husbands is no different from that displayed by ruling class grandeses trainer/managers of the lords of public affairs, these Livia's<sup>52</sup> and Lady Macbeths of the world of power, are indeed the ultimate rulers of the world. Each community, however small, has its local crop of them.

## 9. The Facade of Patriarchy

**My husband may be the head of the house; I am the neck that turns the head.**

— An American housewife.

Many mammal societies once thought to be run by a dominant male are now known to be matriarchies. Elephants are a good example. Because the big bull — the Alpha male — is always the most noticeable and the most threatening, he was always mistakenly thought to be the leader. But the true herd ruler is the Alpha female, who has swiftly and quietly led the group away to safety. She is the one who takes all the decisions.<sup>53</sup>

— Anne Rasa, naturalist and ethnologist.

Contrary to feminist propaganda, which alleges that most human societies are, and have been, patriarchies, human societies are no exception to the rule of matriarchies operating covertly behind a facade of patriarchy. Indeed, patriarchy is a facade, most soothing to the male ego, for wife rule. That this is so is confirmed by women from some of the most dissimilar cultures in the world. Take what an American housewife told me during a wedding reception on a boat in Boston Harbour, quoted above, about the neck that turns the head. And take what a Saudi Arabian woman professor said on the BBC World Service: “The traditional Saudi wife runs her family and runs her husband.”<sup>54</sup>

It may be tempting to say that even if patriarchy is a facade for matriarchy in the home, it couldn’t be so in public life, which is almost exclusively a male turf. But alas, whether in the home or the public arena, matriarchy is the law of life. This proposition may be demonstrated by first looking at some societies where matriarchy is not entirely covert, but operates, in part, through formal, public institutions.

In many traditional African societies, men and women have long had parallel organizations and complementary institutional powers. It is usual for the king, the queen (who, by the way, is not the wife of the king, but the head of the women's parallel branch of public organization), the war marshal and the queen mother, with their respective councils and officials, to exercise separate and countervailing powers. Viewed from that world, much of Western political practices can be quite puzzling. Zulu Sofola, a Nigerian playwright and researcher into African traditions, once retold the following conversation which had taken place between herself and her mother. It occurred at a time when Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of Britain, was embroiled in one of her political battles. Zulu Sofola's mother, who lives in the traditional Igbo milieu, asked her:

'Everybody is talking ill of Margaret Thatcher. Why doesn't she use her powers to stop them?'

'She has no powers other than those of men,' Zulu replied.

'But where is their *Otu-Omu* (the council of women)? The *Omu* should take the matter up and set these men right. Who do they think they are?' demanded Zulu's mother.

'White people don't have *Omu*,' Zulu explained.

'Ah! Who speaks for the women?' her mother wondered.

'In the white man's world, nobody speaks for women,' Zulu told her.

As part of the intricate system of checks and balances in some traditional African societies, women exercise the most effective sanction against misrule. When a king becomes intolerable to his subjects, a procession of grandmothers will march naked to his palace. No ruler survives this final and dramatic repudiation by the mothers of his subjects. Usually, the threat of this march is enough to bring erring and dictatorial rulers to heel.

In the West, where parallel male and female public institutions are not the norm, women nevertheless operate a covert matriarchy. As society matrons, Western elite women control political parties from behind the scenes, from places where they are safe from political shrapnel. Those very few (like Margaret Thatcher or Golda Meir) who

insist on savouring the risks of political combat, have run the men around them like nannies run their packs of little boys. For example, here is how Margaret Thatcher, by manipulating men's fear of women, manages the male politicians and civil servants around her. According to Anthony King, Professor of Government at Essex University:

Mrs Thatcher is, in her personal dealings, a considerate person. She has no trouble in winning the affection and loyalty of those in her immediate circle, principally at No. 10 Downing Street. Nevertheless, in her relations with her fellow ministers, civil servants and Conservative MPs, her distinctive weapon — far more than in the cases of men like Churchill, Macmillan or Wilson — is fear . . . In Mrs Thatcher's case, the use of fear as a political weapon does not imply the use of the chopping block or of the garrotte. On the contrary, those who Mrs Thatcher politically executes can look forward to a knighthood if they are lucky, to a life peerage if they are luckier. Rather, Mrs. Thatcher uses fear in two less malign ways that are nevertheless equally effective. The first is by means of face-to-face fear: 'fear at first hand'. Mrs Thatcher has a formidable personality, and she is capable of hectoring, cajoling, threatening, wrong-footing, bullying, embarrassing and even humiliating her Ministers and officials . . . She puts the fear of God into people, and they usually respond well. Of course, there is no need to use this particular weapon very often: fear of being on the receiving end of a Prime Ministerial tongue-lashing — or even merely of Prime Ministerial *froideur* — is usually adequate to the purpose.

One specific aspect of her use of face-to-face fear is worth mentioning. Mrs Thatcher long ago observed that most well-brought-up Englishmen — especially, though not only, if they went to a public school — have no idea what to do with a strong, assertive woman. Not only are they brought up not to be rude to women: they find it very difficult in general to deal with women in the same matter-of-fact, direct way that they deal with men.

Women to them are mothers or nannies to be feared or sisters to be bullied (or, alternatively, adored). The average Englishman of the middle and upper classes simply quails in the presence of a formidable female personality, torn be-

tween the desire to strike and the desire to sulk, not knowing what an appropriate response would be. Mrs Thatcher long ago noticed that such Englishmen found it hard to stand up to her — and conceived a considerable contempt for the whole tribe. As one of her former Ministers, Sir John Nott, said in a recent television interview, she thinks all men are ‘wimps’.<sup>55</sup>

While the Maggie Thatchers are very few, it is more usual for ruling class matriarchs to run ruling class patriarchs who run the affairs of the world. Recall the case of Mary Cunningham of the USA. In the late 1970s, she had used what Nigerians would call “bottom power” to rocket to Vice-president for Strategy at Bendix Corporation, and to become its effective second-in-command. In speaking about her controversial relationship with William Agee, the Chairman of Bendix (whom she later married), she noted:

The indirect ways are more powerful . . . I'm building the chairman's faith in me so I can sit at his shoulder and influence him for the good of society.<sup>56</sup>

Yes, of course! Only for the good of society!

Perhaps the best recent example of how grand matriarchs run the grand patriarchs is that of Winston Churchill, the great 20th century war leader of the British. A woman neighbour of mine in London once claimed that men were babies. In disbelief, I asked her if she thought that even leaders like Churchill were babies. “Churchill was the biggest baby of all,” she replied. Not long after, I read Mary Soames’ biography of her mother, Lady Clementine Churchill, and had to agree that Winston, if not quite a baby, was a standard patriarch — outwardly strong, dominating and masterly, but in fact a champion coached and managed by none other than his wife!

On the jacket blurb of the biography, I read:

Clementine Churchill was the perfect wife for Winston. For 57 years she supported him through the triumphs, disasters and tensions which ruled his public and private life . . . Always Winston trusted her completely and she became a valuable counsellor and companion. He invariably wanted her opinion — but did not always take her advice. She

believed in him passionately, and in his destiny — standing beside him in public seemingly serene, cool and detached.<sup>57</sup>

Now, that passage could easily describe any famous manager-athlete relationship, like the famous Angelo Dundee-Muhammed Ali combination. Of course, as Winston's coach-manager, Clementine, her coaching done, would sit by the ringside and look on, cool and detached, or even stay away from the bloody fight, while her ward battled it out in the political ring. For Clementine, coaching and managing Winston was a conscious and dedicated career. Here is how their daughter, Mary, puts it:

Winston was to be Clementine's lifework. Her concentration on him and his career consumed the cream of her thought and energy.<sup>58</sup>

One should therefore not be surprised at Clementine's summative remark the night after Winston's funeral. By Mary's own report, before she went to bed that night, Clementine turned to her and said: "You know, Mary, it wasn't a funeral — it was a Triumph."<sup>59</sup> Well, whose Triumph? Clementine's of course! She had managed Winston for 57 years, and at his death the world came to pay tribute, ostensibly to him, but as far as she was concerned, to her success as wife-coach-manager of his successful career.

Now that we have an inkling into women's true role in the management of the world, it should be a sobering realization for men that our official bosses and leaders, even the greatest among them, whom we all look up to as the masters of the world, are each under the guiding thumb of some woman or other, usually his wife. Whenever we gaze in awe at a head of state, or at a head of household, we should gaze in even greater awe at the little lady by his side who controls him like a puppeteer does a puppet. Appearances should not be allowed to mislead us as to where the balance of power lies between them.

We have seen how matriarchs rule men in public life — the *Otu Omu*, the naked grandmothers, Maggie Thatcher, Mary Cunningham, Clementine Churchill. But how do wives generally use the patriarchal facade to control and exploit their husbands at home? Just consider some of the tasks a wife is able to shift over to her husband by appealing to his ego as patriarch or official head of her household.

"O husband mine!" she tacitly says: "You are the official head of this house; you are my leader, my lawgiver. You are the strong one. Won't you feed and protect me and our little child? Won't you see to it that our child is well behaved?" In this way, she deftly assigns him the job of nest provisioner; the job of nest protector; and the job of ogre or disciplinarian of the nest. If he fails to provision the nest to her satisfaction, he suffers her contempt, as well as his own, for not living up to his macho expectations. If thieves attack her nest and he cannot fight them off, he suffers her contempt, as well as his own, for not carrying out his macho duties. If he dies defending her nest, she weeps for a day or a week, and sets about recruiting another nest guard. She can discipline the child in his name, or frighten it with his image as bogeyman (Wait till your daddy comes home!), without herself earning the child's resentment. By directing its resentment towards its bogeyman father, she can retain the child's image of her as the "sweet mother". If he declines to act as the disciplinarian and ogre; if he prefers to earn the image of "sweet father", she resents it. As one wife, Natalie Rogers, complained:

My husband preferred the role of playmate to the kids when they were young, rather than accept his share of the disciplining. I felt like the ogre.<sup>60</sup>

If the wife became the overt head of her own nest, she would have to do all that for herself; and she would have to do far more. There is an Igbo "Widow's Lament," based on farming life, which details the six occasions when a widow recalls the death of her husband and cries uncontrollably. The first three are when she needs him for farm labour (planting, tending and harvesting), for each of which she now has to hire and pay labourers. The fourth is when there is a meeting of the kindred: with her husband dead, "who will inform the widow of the deliberations?" The fifth is when there is a festival, and she has to buy her own fowl to cook for the feast. The sixth "is the day she is drenched in her unrepaired thatched house; that day she knows nothing is as painful as losing a husband."<sup>61</sup>

Let us consider the fourth job listed in that lament: his job as her political emissary to the arena of public affairs. It entails much more than reporting back what transpires in the assembly. As the ostensible head of her nest, he participates in politics in order to protect her and

her nest from those dangers, social and natural, which her society combats through public measures. When it becomes necessary to protect the society by violent means, he goes to battle and even dies that she may live on in safety. As her voice in public affairs he contributes to deliberations which make laws that serve her interest.

In Western societies in the days of male franchise, the husband, as voter, was his wife's political emissary. He used his vote to elect male law makers who passed laws in his wife's interest, laws which often punished the natural inclinations and delights of men, and helped to trap men in nest slavery. Some of these laws, passed by all-male legislatures, are monuments to female rascality and misandry. For example, long before women got the vote in the USA, there were laws against prostitution, a service which men needed to lesson the tyranny of frigid or sex-striking wives. Also, there has long been an anti-husband bias in the marriage and divorce rules of the Western World, a bias which, in some cases, gave the family house, custody of the children, etc. preferentially to the woman. Women did not have to have the vote, did not have to become the majority of lawmakers, for such misandrous laws to be passed. They were passed by male law makers, who were elected by male voters, all of whom acted as instructed by their wives and mothers! Oh yes! How readily a man will sacrifice men's interests for women's once his patriarch's ego has been puffed, or his penis has been twisted!

But why does the average woman prefer covert to overt matriarchy? Just consider the matter from her standpoint. Overt leadership would give a woman duties which expose her to too many pressures and risks. As she well knows, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. She therefore concedes that onerous role to the patriarch, and saves herself a lot of hassles. She makes him the formal leader of her nest, and shifts unto his shoulders the burdens of decision-making, the anxieties of wielding authority, the dangers of defending her honour and her life through fights, lawsuits and wars. When she declares that she is weak, and lays her head on his chest and weeps to prove it, and lets him make the decisions, she simultaneously massages his ego and exploits him. She offloads high-pressure and high-risk jobs unto the patriarch, and takes for herself the superior but safer position of the power behind the throne. Thus, behind the patriarch stands his matriarch: she runs her world by running the man who runs the world for her.

Under this arrangement, a woman has everything to gain and nothing to lose, except little vanities. Being far more down to earth, she

prefers the substance to the shadow, the power to the glory, the rewards to the exertion.

Behold the matriarch, the great queen bee, in all her power. Hers is the power to manipulate from hidden and protected places. She is the back seat driver, giving instructions from the owner's corner. She is the supreme executive, excellent at delegating the most burdensome and dangerous jobs to her chief lieutenant, alias the patriarch.

And the patriarch? He is simply her foreman, a glorified foreman, who oversees the work in the fields. With his ego well massaged by the trappings of nominal leadership, he gladly supplies his matriarch, to the best of his abilities, with wealth, honour, status, and fame. Each day he spends eighteen hours or more as her agent in the great, wide, rough-and-tumble world; for an hour in the morning, and an hour and a half at night, she inspires and instructs him to make forays into the world for her. And while he is in his office, working up hypertension or a coronary, she lounges at her sauna or her hairdresser's; or she enjoys herself shopping, spending his money, or nattering away with her fellow queen bees at the bridge table. His are the risks and hardships; hers the leisured enjoyment of the rewards. Her motto, in effect, is this:

O patriarch, O husband mine!  
Suffer the burdens of leadership,  
But hand me its choicest fruits.

Should he ever tire of being a figurehead, or should he, horror of horrors, threaten to quit his job, the little wife has fine ways of intimidating her huge, figurehead leader. In a letter to her daughter, one British wife demonstrated just how easily a wife can quell a rebellion by her husband should he even hint at it. Writing to her daughter Kate, she told the following story:

On that evening your Dad leaped out of his chair at 8 o'clock, collected his wee bag full of empty Coke bottles and I thought Oh Christ — here we go again — lemonade, big spender. I said I didn't want any — that did it, he said he would get pissed by himself and for three hours the air was Blue. I got the usual old guff about how the daughters I loved have spent years pleading with him to leave me — owing to me being sick in the mind, but *he* couldn't leave me because A) he is the loyal type and he made up his mind to make the best of me

and B) he was worried about leaving his children in my care. He was roaring with laughter telling me he had put in his resignation and was leaving his job on December 31st and once he got that gratuity in his hands, life was going to be all women and gambling, I would get nothing out of it. All the people I think are my good friends, he said, have all advised him to leave me. I thought it all over for two days — not having said one word that evening — on Sunday night I said to him very quietly — ‘You are not going to do what you said you would with your gratuity and savings — I sweated blood all those years for you, to save and see that *you* never went without anything.’ I said, ‘you just try it mate and I’ll get a heavy mob (*Kate’s feminist friends*) on to you, that will leave you so that you won’t look in a mirror for the next twenty years and you tell me just one more time that I’m sick in the mind and I’ll kick your teeth so far down your throat that they will come out the other end.’ I banged the table saying ‘*do you understand?*’ He was literally shaking like a jelly. Since then he has been very nice and I’m almost certain his shouts about leaving the job (my fault) were a come-on to get his own way.<sup>62</sup> Anyway as I said, everything is now very pleasant.

Yes! When this nest-slave threatened to abscond with some of the proceeds of his life-long toil (the gratuity and savings), he was brought to heel by his owner. So much for the notion of the husband as boss to his wife!

But why do men settle for a patriarchy that is, alas, a mere facade? The answer is quite simple. A facade is the most that their rulers will allow them; and a facade is the least that will make the male ego feel good enough to endure the burdens of his allotted role. Furthermore, should men try to subvert matriarchy in order to substitute a genuine patriarchy, women will thwart them. Men, therefore, settle for a figurehead patriarchy simply because they must.

## 10. The Double Standard

Feminism does propose — as antifeminists accuse — that men and women be treated the same. Feminism is a radical stance against double standards in rights and responsibilities, and feminism is a revolutionary advocacy of a single standard of human freedom.<sup>63</sup>

— Andrea Dworkin

One law for ox and lion is tyranny.<sup>64</sup>

— William Blake

Women who complain about the double standard almost always point to the general tolerance for male philandering and the contrasting censure of female philandering. Feminists additionally cite such things as unequal pay for equal work, as well as the traditional assignment of unpaid housework and child rearing to women, and of money-earning work outside the home to men. But are these all there is to the matter? In what other areas of life does the double standard operate? And who, on balance, gains or loses more from the overall double standard — men or women?

Here are a few other areas, from the symbolic to the substantive, where the double standard operates:

- 1) In the Western World, the wife of a king is queen; but the husband of a queen is not necessarily king. Otherwise, why is Prince Phillip, husband to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, only a prince and not king? And why was Prince Albert, husband to Britain's Queen Victoria, only a prince and not king? Such is the double standard in royal nomenclature.
- 2) The rites of love require that if a man loves a woman, he show it by giving gifts to, and doing things for, her; however, if a woman loves a

man, she is expected to show it by accepting gifts and services from him. Thus, for him, it is better to give than to receive, while for her, it is better to receive than to give.

3) Men are expected to provide economic support for women, but women are not expected to support men. Indeed, in nearly every culture, a man supported by a woman is looked upon with considerable disapproval. Whether in marriage or outside it, a kept woman is all right whereas a kept man is not. This double standard is enshrined in some Western wedding vows in which the man's pledge "all my worldly goods with thee to share" is not reciprocated by the woman. This non-reciprocity was long enshrined in law in the USA. There, the husband was legally obliged to support his wife, regardless of her income and wealth, but the wife had no obligation to support her husband. Her income was entirely her own, to spend how she pleased. She had no obligation to contribute money to support her family, unless her husband was unable to earn a living, and would otherwise become a public charge.

4) A mother and a father are not equally responsible for the financial support of their children. The responsibility is primarily with the father; only if he died, or was manifestly unable to support them, would the responsibility become the mother's. This is so under US law, and customary in many other lands.

5) Beauty and virginity are valued in women; but physical strength and economic ability are valued in men. Moreover, if a man cons a girl out of her virginity, it is viewed with disapproval: in fact, where pre-marital loss of virginity is deemed to dishonour a girl's family, a man could be murdered by her vengeful relatives. But if a woman cons a man out of his wealth, neither a crime nor an act calling for vengeance is deemed to have been committed. The fellow is simply dismissed as a fool, while the girl's acumen may be greatly admired. Without the double standard, both acts would either be censured or commended.

6) Everything possible is allowed (such as adverts with images of nude females in provocative poses, as well as live women in scanty dresses on the streets) which puts men in a state of sexual unrest; but little or nothing is allowed into the environment which would similarly disturb women. Thus, the environment is polluted into a sexual stimulant for men, but is left sexually serene for women.

7) Men are trained to initiate sexual contact; women to be restrained, and even to offer coy resistance to sexual advances from

men. This difference in conditioning puts control of sexual encounters in the hands of women, for the one who needs sex less (or who makes a good show of needing it less) gets to control the encounter.

8) Whereas the world of high risk is reserved for men, the world of maximum safety is reserved for women. This is most blatant in war, where women are exempt from the risks of bearing arms, risks which are obligatory for men. Even in those extreme cases where endangered societies have felt it necessary to prepare their entire population, male and female, for war, women are rarely obliged to share frontline duty equally with men. This double standard grants men the sweet privilege of being killed off in early youth. And if a city is sacked, the men's usual fate is to be put to the sword. As for the women, their lives are usually spared and, at the worst, they are married or enslaved by the victors. In any case they live on.

9) In the division of labour, within each class, women get the lighter and less risky tasks, whether in the home or outside it. Outside the class of the idle rich, in which neither husband nor wife need work at all, both do work in the home. Lest we forget, the husband's housework includes physically maintaining the house, or even building it; mowing the lawns, mending the fences, splitting firewood and guarding the compound from intruders. All this is in addition to whatever he does outside the home to earn income for the entire family through farming, trading, or salaried employment. As for work outside the home, in the poorer classes, both husband and wife have to earn income. In the "working" and middle classes, the wife has the option not to earn income, but the husband does not. In the upper classes, it is not respectable for the wife to earn income. All this too constitutes a double standard that is to women's advantage.

10) It is also an example of the double standard that male chauvinism is declared sexist, but female chauvinism is not. In fact, female chauvinism goes largely unrecognized and uncriticised.

This list could be much extended; but the general picture should now be clear: the brunt of the double standard is borne, not by women, but by men. Yet, those women who gripe about "the double standard" do not point to the cases here outlined; and feminists who claim to be crusading for equality don't demand equal treatment in these areas.

Incidentally, on closer examination, even the notion that men have more sexual freedom than women proves to be illusory. Since it takes

two to tangle, men, as a group, cannot have even one more instance of coitus with women than women have with men! If there are more philandering men than women, then the average philandering woman philanders more than the average philandering man! Why, then, is there the belief that men are more promiscuous than women? In part, this may be due to men's tendency to boast. But, as we have just shown, that men boast more does not mean that they fuck more. The arithmetic is against that! Also, the average promiscuous woman tends to keep quiet about the matter. She conducts her multiple affairs with great discretion. The result is an illusion that men are more promiscuous than women. Thus, women's complaint about not having equal rights to sexual promiscuity turns out to be a complaint about appearances, not about realities.

And even in this matter of promiscuity and infidelity, where the double standard ostensibly works against women, they manage to turn it to good use in controlling men. A wife turns it to her advantage in this way: "No philandering for me?" she asks. "Okay, then. If I am to stay faithful, you must pay my price. You must meet my every wish. If you don't give me all the money I want for my pleasures, I'll get it from other men. Your failure will force me to it. It would be your fault." Terror at the prospect of his wife prostituting herself for what she wants keeps many a man toiling away, like a galley slave, to support her in whatever lavish style she would like.

The plight of such a husband ought to be compared with what happened when a young woman, Solange, threatened to go into prostitution if her mother, French novelist Aurore Dupin, alias George Sand, refused to support her in the style to which she aspired. Her mother simply called her bluff, and in very revealing words.

Solange had separated from her husband, and was living in a convent on an allowance from her mother. She wanted an increase in her allowance to enable her start a new and better life in Paris. Solange, therefore, wrote her mother, Aurore:

Having to live in this isolation, with the sound and movement of life all around me — people laughing together, horses galloping, children playing in the sunshine, lovers being happy — it is not so much a matter of being bored as of being made to despair. People wonder how it is that girls without minds of their own or any sort of education allow themselves to drift into a life of pleasure and vice! Can even women with

judgement and warm affections be sure of being able to steer clear of all that . . .?<sup>65</sup>

Faced with this subtle blackmail, Aurore promptly wrote back:

The only thing which will console you is money . . . and a great deal of it . . . I could only give you what you need by working twice as hard as I do now, and if I did that I'd be dead in six months, since even my present programme is beyond my strength — besides, even if I could work twice as hard and keep at it for a few more years, what is there to say that it is my duty to turn myself into a galley slave or a complete hack merely to supply you with money to burn? What I can give you you shall have.

...  
So you find it difficult, do you, being lonely and poor, not to step into a life of vice? . . . It is all you can do to endure being cooped up within four walls while women are laughing and horses are galloping outside? 'What a horrible fate!' as Maurice would say . . . All right then, just try a little vice . . . just try being a whore. I don't think you would make much of a success of it . . . a woman has got to be a great deal more beautiful and more intelligent than you are before she can hope to be pursued, or even sought out by men who are eager and anxious to pay for her favours . . . men with money to spend want women who know how to earn it.<sup>66</sup>

Aurore was having none of it, and said so in blunt terms. A husband faced with the same threat, would fear social disgrace, and would buckle and become a "galley slave", all because he had undertaken to economically support his wife! Yes, what even a woman's own mother would not put up with, her husband is required to endure.

Mindful of this threat of prostitution, whereby wives can blackmail their husbands, some men in the world's more pragmatic cultures operate on the principle that, no matter what a man provides his wife, she may still prostitute herself for more; therefore, give her as little as possible, and turn a blind eye to her whoring, but collect your children from her when they grow big enough. This is illustrated in the following fictional episode:

'Don't let's waste time, Alhaji, my children . . . are at home' Folake said shaking her enormous buttocks to him as she walked to the bed and undressed at the same time. Karimu, shaking all over his body, followed up in a school boy's obedience.

In five minutes when they lay spent on the bed, he continued his research.

'I'm confused Mama Toyin, but why disgrace your husband? You mean he doesn't feed you?'

'Oh, are you a stranger in Yorubaland?' she asked slowly and gasped for more breath. 'I think this country ranks among the leaders in the rate of adultery in the world . . .'

'Why?' he feigned seriousness.

'I will tell you. You see what you men here do is that when the woman joins you in the matrimonial home, you give her some paltry sum of money to start some business, in most cases trading. That is all. All that the woman and the children will need; feeding and clothing and everything, is financed from this trade. What they refuse to know is that the profit from the trade may not always be enough to support the incurred expenses. That means that money has to be taken from the capital of the business. You do that and the business starts to decline. There is nothing you can tell the husband to win his sympathy . . .'<sup>67</sup>

Under that situation, some women reciprocate by bearing children for different men, with or without formally marrying any of them. They then collect from each as hefty a sum for business or child support as they can extract. An aspect of this practice is reported in this story from a Lagos hairdressing salon:

Omoba announced her intention of making a name change. She, formerly known as Mrs Omoba Y was now to be addressed as Mrs Omoba Z. I can't give you a report on whether all documents were to remain valid or not. My guess though is that there are no documents! . . . Omoba was changing her (marital) status for the sixth time because she had just had her sixth child for the sixth man! That is to say,

every time Omoba had a child, she took on the last name of the man . . . Omoba's point was that, it was all well and good to want or expect a man to make a commitment formally but, 'what if he couldn't or wouldn't?' She believed the next best thing for a woman's protection is to adopt his name. Omoba believed that having a child for a man was as major an event as marriage itself.<sup>68</sup>

As we have seen, each double standard, including that which is most on women's minds, works to men's disadvantage, and helps to guarantee at least one of women's numerous privileges. Yet feminists purport to crusade against the double standard in order to remove its disadvantages to women! Now, wouldn't it be nice if feminism really wanted a single standard of human freedom? Wouldn't it be nice to have a single code of conduct for the lioness and the ox? And wouldn't it be nice if that code specified that neither should devour the other? Wouldn't that be simply wonderful for the ox?

But alas, given their complementarity, requiring men and women to be treated the same, to have identical rights and responsibilities, would be like forcing right hands into left gloves. Yet some brilliant feminists would have us believe that that would be freedom!

While some double standards are inherent in the complementarity of male and female, there are many which are not: the latter could be abolished without harm, except to women's privileges. Dress codes could be either drab for all, or sexually provocative for all; adverts could flaunt the appropriate male characteristics, as ubiquitously and provocatively as they do female sexual characteristics, so that the environment is as erotically unsettling for women as it is made for men. Women could be treated the same as men in war, so they can risk death equally.

If every abolishable double standard were abolished, many of men's handicaps in life would vanish. With a mountain of male disabilities thus removed, men would begin to rise toward equality in hardships and privileges with women.

## 11. The Silly Souls of Men

Masculine woolly-mindedness has been a source of female power for a long way back.<sup>69</sup>

— Robert Ardrey

The head of the average man is packed with silly beliefs about men and women. Like fumes of booze that boost the ego, these beliefs cloud up man's perception, and leave him swaggering and staggering through life like a hopeless drunk, to be taken advantage of by any woman who wants to.

Among the most notorious of his beliefs are that women are weak and fragile; that men are cleverer than women; that women are fickle, passive, irrational, helpless and sentimental; that men are superior to women in the natural order of the universe; that women are mysterious. These beliefs are so palpably silly that any clear-eyed and fair-minded observer can only agree with Marie Corelli who spoke of the "silly souls of men"<sup>70</sup> by which women entrap them.

A sober look at the actual world yields quite a different picture. It shows that women are far less fragile and weak than they pretend to be; that women are cleverer than men; that their fickleness, passivity, irrationality and helplessness are calculated instruments of power; that women are far less sentimental, but more down-to-earth, cynical and ruthless than men; that, in so far as a natural order exists, women are, within it, superior to men; and that women are not mysterious at all, but only appear so owing to male foolishness. Let us go through these popular male illusions and see how badly they accord with the realities, and how women use them to exploit and rule men.

Are women weak and fragile? At any rate, are they as weak and fragile as male pride imagines them to be? As we could all verify for ourselves, some men are physically stronger than some women, and some women are stronger than some men. Even if it is true that, on

average, and in specific aspects, men are stronger than women, the difference is routinely exaggerated, by men so as to boost their egos, and by women so as to get men to do things for them.

I was once helping a friend help his girlfriend move her belongings out of a New York apartment. After taking a heavy trunk down to the moving van, we were huffing and puffing our way back up the stairs. As soon as the woman and a girlfriend of hers saw us, they dropped a mattress they were carrying to the elevator, and began to complain that it was too heavy! Yet, before they saw us, they carried it with no visible difficulty!

The idea of the stronger male is often dramatized by the image of a weak, defenceless wife cowering before blows from her huge husband. Yet incidents of husbands who are battered by their much stronger wives abound. Much is not heard of these for two reasons: male pride would not advertise the fact, and women's dissembling often gives the impression that the husband-battering wife is herself the battered wife. Here is a story of a dissembling bedroom terrorist, as it was reported in the Nigerian press by a woman columnist:

Just recently, a colleague recounted his experience with one of his neighbours. Cotenants used to look at the husband of this woman with distaste — what with her constant shrills of pain and cries that her husband was beating the life out of her. On the day in question, my colleague could no longer stand the woman's heart-rending cries for help. He tried the couple's door; it was locked as usual. Out of desperation, he climbed through to their balcony to try to appeal to the callous man through their bedroom window. He told me: 'I was surprised to find the woman riding on the back of her husband and giving him a good pummelling, and at the same time screaming at the top of her voice that she was being beaten to death.'<sup>71</sup>

As in the matter of physical strength, the customary contrast between female fragility and male sturdiness enables women to push unto men as much as possible of the world's tough and risky jobs. Because it helps them to exploit men, women have a vested interest in making themselves look more fragile than they really are. In fact, one of the perennial objectives of female fashion is to heighten the illusion of female fragility.

The devices used for this purpose have ranged from foot binding in old China; through tight corsets that produced on the women of Victorian England the illusion of an hourglass waist, just waiting to break; to the high-heeled shoes of the modern West. The Victorian illusion of female fragility was given both a physical and a psychological dimension, through a self-presentation which combined a thin waist, a pale skin which showed every blush, and fainting fits which called for smelling salts. Such a woman would appear so fragile in body and soul that any gallant man would feel obliged to reach out and support her.

In 20th century Western fashion, the high heel is the foundation for the elaborate disguising of female sturdiness. Consider a woman who has dieted herself down to twiggy thinness; who stuffs herself into a skirt that is tight about the knees or ankles, hindering her from taking long and vigorous strides; who then perches herself on stiletto heels, to produce an overall effect of a tall, thin, willowy masquerade walking on wobbly stilts. The impression she has carefully created is of an adult who cannot balance firmly on her own two feet. Like an invalid who can hardly stand up straight, her figure cries out for help, for a sturdy man to sweep her off her feet and carry her across a windy street, or up a hill path; or better yet, for some gallant who will pull up beside her in a Rolls Royce and save her the obvious difficulty of walking down the street. Given her self-created image of helplessness, what man would be so ill-mannered, so ungallant as to ask her to carry a heavy, bulky box and step across a gutter?

A man once got a woman to take off her high heels and her knee-tight skirt. As she stood on her stocking feet, as firm and stable on the ground as one of Degas' dancers, he exclaimed:

Look at those ankles! Look at those calves! Where is the fragile, willowy woman who was staggering in the breeze a while ago? So that's what those high heels are about? So that's what tight-kneed skirts are about?

At which the lady picked up her handbag and struck him, drawing blood from his lip! Yes, women's craftiness in hiding their sturdiness and strength is extraordinary.

Women may not be as weak or fragile as they look; but aren't men certainly cleverer? Now, now; men the cleverer sex? These creatures that women fool with a bit of face paint here, some finery there, and a

smile under dimmed lights? These gulls who can be subdued with a trickle of actress' tears, or confused with a sliver of thigh showing through a split in the skirt? These fools who, down through history, have been stuck with clearing the marshes, digging the coal, and getting bloodied in battle? They the cleverer sex? Ridiculous, simply ridiculous!

Lest we forget, cleverness is not demonstrated by getting stuck with the hardest, dirtiest, riskiest jobs in the world, but by dumping them on others. Even in the routine matter of winning a living, any woman who doesn't want to be bothered with it manages to dump it on some man: either her father, or her lover, or her husband, or her sons and sons-in-law. Yet who are so stupid as to claim that they are cleverer than women? The very same men who serve women!

In the West, some of these men, especially the brawny robots who are so easily manipulated by women, will go so far as to speak of the "dumb blonde" as the ultimate in human stupidity. Yet, to look into the matter is to discover that the allegedly dumb blonde is no such thing! She lives rich by expending little more than the yellowness of her hair. She uses her yellow hair to rule the heart and pick the pocket of some blonde-obsessed macho with more money than sense. She laughs her way through an easy life and into a hefty inheritance. If anything, she is a great maximizer of returns, cleverly getting the best of life with the least effort. Frankly, the proverbial "dumb blonde" is probably the cleverest thing in the world.

And if a "dumb blonde" is actually stupid at things which need intellectual sophistication, well why not? In her world, all the mental calisthenics she needs is to say her wish and some blonde-struck macho would move mountains to satisfy it. Any wonder if she should fail to exercise, let alone build up her brainpower? Anyway, however dumb a "dumb blonde" actually is, she is still cleverer than any man she rules through his worship of her yellow hair; for how can one be cleverer than one's ruler? In any case, the degree of a "dumb blonde's" dumbness is a direct measure of just how little brains it takes a woman to rule even the cleverest of men.

It must be conceded that a beautiful woman does not need much brains to get what she wants in life. As the Igbo say, beauty is woman's wealth. Stupid though a beautiful woman may be, when she presses the appropriate button on his ego, some big, clever robot will do her bidding. If she says: "I bet you aren't man enough to lift that rock," his taunted ego would respond: "Not man enough to lift that little pebble?"

And to prove that he is indeed Superman, our Samson will sprain his spine and risk a hernia to lift a ten-ton rock all by himself.

Faced with the chore of doing the family accounts, she will slip out of it by saying: "Darling! You know I don't have a head for numbers. Be an angel and give your brilliant attention to these bank statements." And to live up to the flattery, he will work all night on the accounts while she gets her beauty sleep. Yet, all that notwithstanding, the robot actually believes that he is cleverer than his manipulator!

Women, alas, are not stupid. But being brilliant manipulators, they choose to appear stupid so as not to wound the male ego with the truth. As a result, men appear cleverer than women, but only in the dumb male's eyes. And whenever a woman is sorely tempted to stop disseminating, and to show just how clever she is, the female superego, alias "The Angel in the House," would whisper to her (as it reportedly did to Virginia Woolf):

Be sympathetic; be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex.<sup>72</sup> Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own.

And why should she not obey? What does she lose by allowing her slave to believe whatever nonsense makes him work tirelessly for her?

Men do need to look with skeptical eyes at women's show of stupidity. When men do, they will discover, probably to their shock, that it is a calculated stupidity in the service of cupidity. And they must concede that it takes great cleverness to feign such stupidity successfully.

Men claim that women are fickle, passive, irrational, helpless and sentimental. To the extent that these claims are true, these characteristics are not the marks of weakness or inferiority which men presume them to be: rather, they are proof of women's supremacy, and they also serve as tools of female power.

Isn't fickleness a trait of arbitrary power? Any subordinate soon learns not to be fickle toward his superior; fickleness in a subordinate is called unreliability, and it is one luxury he cannot afford unless he wishes to be fired. Only male despots, like Stalin or Louis XIV, can be as fickle as the average woman.

And isn't passivity a mark of enormous power and privilege? Note how the ceaseless activity of worker bees serves the passive queen bee!

And isn't much of woman's show of irrationality a part of her power play, a ruse to frustrate men into yielding to her whatever is at issue? She puts on an act so irrational that the exasperated man, in exchange for some peace and sanity around the house, grants her whatever it is she wants. When seen in their proper light, her fickleness, passivity and irrationality are not signs of weakness or inferiority, but rather testaments to woman's superior powers. They are, indeed, not the traits of serfs, but the privileges of princesses.

The illusion of female helplessness is also a handy weapon against men. It ought to be pretty obvious, especially after the triumphs of women in previously male careers, that anything man can do woman can also do, except inseminate women. So woman is, intrinsically, no more helpless than man. But exaggerating her helplessness serves her well: it helps to get men to work for her, from opening doors to fighting wars that safeguard her interests. On the domestic front, she frequently takes the most outrageous advantage of her alleged helplessness. For instance, consider this case of a man who discovered his wife's infidelity. Confronted with the evidence, she eventually confessed, but added: "I shan't see him anymore; if you left me, I wouldn't know what to do". With his gallantry thus triggered by her alleged helplessness, he let her get away with her serious breach of their marital contract!

The male illusion that women are sentimental probably derives from the fact that women are given to such emotional displays as hugging and crying, indulge in baby-talk with babies, and are avid readers and prolific writers of romances. It is therefore presumed that they are not ruthless, tough-minded or cynical. As usual, the realities are rather different.

In a letter to Madame Mohl, an old family friend of hers, Florence Nightingale, the famous Lady with the Lamp, said:

You say women are more sympathetic than men. Now if I were to write a book out of my experience, I should begin, *Women have no sympathy*. Yours is the tradition — mine is the conviction of experience.<sup>73</sup>

One mother, writing to one of her daughters, said of another daughter:

Annie is a hard wee nut, don't get taken in by her tears, she can turn them on at the touch of a button.<sup>74</sup>

That should make us wonder at any woman's ever ready river of actress' tears!

And in comparing her father, Pandit Nehru, with herself, Indira Gandhi said:

I am less romantic and emotional than he was. Women are more down to earth than men.<sup>75</sup>

These claims are borne out by a recent research on European and American women by Professor Donald Kanter. According to a press report,

Kanter, a psychologist at Boston University, conducted a survey of 2250 European women for an advertising firm. He uncovered layer upon layer of 'staggering cynicism.' Eight out of 10 women thought most people lie to get what they want, more than 80 per cent agreed that people inwardly dislike putting themselves out to help others, and that it's harder and harder to make true friends. 'I'd expect the gentler sex to be softer, more charitable,' Kanter concluded. 'The responses we got showed most European women think people are liars, reality is money, and an unselfish person is a pathetic figure. That's why they despised Jimmy Carter.'

Kanter has now finished a new survey of middle class American wives and is dismayed by the results. About 50 per cent believe that most people are just out for themselves and nearly two-thirds agree with the European women that by and large human beings are selfish, mendacious and money mad. 'The central tendencies are quite alarming,' Kanter said. 'I never expected to see numbers so large.'<sup>76</sup>

Poor Professor Kanter! One of his cherished illusions about women seems to have been shattered, and he seems quite shocked! One may well marvel at the sentimental education which blinded him to women's basic cynicism. Anyway, if Florence Nightingale and Indira Gandhi are to be believed, Kanter's finding is not outlandish, and the cynic in Mrs America is the cynic in every girl.

Man's belief that he is naturally superior to woman is perhaps the greatest tribute ever paid to male conceit by wilful blindness: evidence to the contrary is everywhere. Just consider this. All that a woman has to do for sex, whether for pleasure or procreation, is signal her availability and, unless she is unspeakably ugly and stinking, there will be a stampede of men competing for the chance to service her. The poor devils must show their credentials, and must pass whatever test she sets, or she will deny them access to herself. Yet it is these very males — who have to fight and claw at one another; who have to woo, cajole, beg or even resort to rape to gain access to her — it is these very pitiful males who proudly declare themselves superior to her! They conveniently forget (for their own ego's sake) to ask: What would they themselves say of candidates who claimed to be superior to those who interviewed, judged, selected and admitted them to positions for which they went down on their knees to beg?

The notion of male superiority is a noisy myth, a compensatory boast, born of men's acute consciousness of inferiority. Rather than being inferior to man, woman's superiority is incontestable, and is based on the womb. After all, the achievements of even a Caesar are but credentials which he tenders before a woman when he competes with rival suitors for the use of her womb.

Man's sense of woman's mysteriousness was there at the dawn of history, and persists till this day. Ancient Pharaonic Egyptians recorded it in the saying: "One does not ever discover the heart of a woman anymore than one knows the sky."<sup>77</sup> A 19th century Britisher, Coventry Patmore, echoed them:

A woman is a foreign land,  
Of which, though there he settle young,  
A man will ne'er quite understand  
The customs, politics, and tongue.<sup>78</sup>

And even Sigmund Freud, the great explorer of the human psyche, confessed:

The great question . . . which I have not been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is 'What does a woman want?'.<sup>79</sup>

And on any day, you will find some man somewhere baffled into asking the same perennial question: "What does a woman want?"

Why do men find women so baffling? The answer, as a German woman, Eva Figes, put it, is that "man's vision of woman is not objective, but an uneasy combination of what he wishes her to be."<sup>80</sup> Of course, this lack of an objective view is precisely why woman, who he does not allow himself to see as she is, baffles man. If he ever took the trouble to observe and study woman, instead of projecting his fantasies and wishes onto her, he would find her much less of a mystery.

In my view, men would understand women much better by avoiding one subjective error. Because men's chief interest in women is sexual, men are prone to think that women's chief interest in men is also sexual. In so doing, they overlook the point that men and women are biologically complementary rather than identical; and that, therefore, their main interest in each other would be complementary rather than identical. This elementary error is the key to men's historic inability to understand women. When women's behaviour is analyzed from the standpoint of men's interests and needs, it becomes incomprehensible, and quite rightly too.

Women, of course, do not make a similar mistake; they do not confuse men's key interest in women with their own in men. Having grasped men's key interest in women, they use it to analyse men's behaviour, and that is why they find men so transparent that one woman, Jackie Robb, could say: "You can tell all you need to know about a man by the way he peels an orange."<sup>81</sup> By the way, that women so easily understand men, and that men find women so baffling, is additional evidence that women are cleverer than men.

However, it should not be too difficult for those who have understood the mysteries of the universe, including evolution and quantum physics, to understand women, provided they look and see and think. If men start from the complementarity of the sexes; if they accept that men pursue wealth, fame, honour and power for the love of women (i.e. in order to trade these for access to a womb); if they heed the Igbo saying that beauty is woman's wealth and wealth man's beauty, then they would realize how natural it is for women's aim to be the trading of their womb and beauty for a share of men's wealth, fame, honour, power, and status. By focussing on women's key interest, women's behaviour becomes readily understandable and far from mysterious. In brief, woman's mysteriousness is projected unto her by the muddled male mind.

On the whole, contrary to men's ego-boosting illusions, man may be the brawnier and brainier sex; woman is not the weaker but the wilier sex. However helpless and sentimental women may appear to be, in those things which matter to them they are less sentimental, less naive, more cynical, more ruthless, and more tenacious than men. If men could be even half as fickle, passive or irrational as women are, wouldn't their lot be easier? As for the dogma that women are a sex inferior to men, it is simply stupid. Nobody who knows the ways of the world would accept it. Ask Chaucer, ask Boccaccio, ask the Chagga Elders. And as for the mysteriousness of women, it is a shadow cast upon them by male fuzzymindedness. All these silly male illusions enable women to manipulate and rule men; and that is why mothers, and all other women, would rather encourage than dispel them.

## 12. Man's Fear of Woman

**There is a deep-seated fear of women in every man . . . An average man harbours a sense of powerlessness towards a woman's sexuality and feels vulnerable to this sexuality.**<sup>82</sup>

— Juliet, a Nigerian, unmarried mother.

**It is women that men fear most of all.**<sup>83</sup>

— A male psychiatrist.

**American manhood may have kicked out the first Redcoats, defeated the Indians and conquered the moon, but the truth is they are now retreating in hopeless disarray before their own womenfolk.**<sup>84</sup>

— Alan Whicker

The myths of many lands encode man's experience of woman as a being to be feared: feared as mother and as consort. Woman as mother evokes awe; woman as consort provokes terror; in either aspect, it is fear — fear reverential and hostile fear — that woman inspires in man.

As the Great Mother, woman enjoys the awe due to one who brings forth life, as well as the reverence and loyalty due to the child's nurse, nourisher, teacher, healer, trainer, and first refuge from danger. In her awe-inspiring aspect, which breeds a habit of obedience, woman is represented in the pantheons of many lands: as Egyptian Aset/Isis (goddess of birth, goddess of the Earth, restorer of life to Asare/Osiris, ruler in heaven, on earth and in the world below); as Prithivi of the Hindus (goddess of the Earth, vegetation deity who rescued the world from famine); as Omeciuatl of the Aztecs (mother of the human race); as Gaea of the Greeks and Terra of the Romans (mother of the gods, universal mother, personifying the Earth); as Ala of the Igbo (earth

goddess, goddess of creativity, guardian of morality). In all these guises, woman-as-mother inspires obedience in man.

Man's habit of obeying mother is part of the enduring make-up of those great macho dictators who, all their lives, remain obedient mama's boys. Strong women executives, whether in business or politics, who dominate their lieutenants, are in part able to do so by evoking in the men their childhood awe of Mother-who-must-be-obeyed.

Many myths and legends also record man's fear of woman as a devouring consort, as one whose company is fatal to man's liberty and adventurous spirit. Let us consider a few: the Babylonian myth of Gilgamesh's encounter with Ishtar; the Greek legend of Odysseus' struggles against Calypso, Circe and the Sirens; and the Hebrew myth of Adam's pathetic fall at a sly shove from his consort Eve.

In the epic of *Gilgamesh* we read that Ishtar prayed Gilgamesh to be his consort; and Gilgamesh answered in scorn, enumerating her previous lovers and their harsh fates:

Which of your lovers have you loved forever?  
Which of your little shepherds has continued to please you?  
Come, let me name your lovers for you.

.....  
You loved a shepherd, a herdsman,  
who endlessly put up cakes for you  
and every day slaughtered kids for you.  
You struck him, turned him into a wolf.  
His own boys drove him away,  
and his dogs tore his hide to bits.

You loved also Ishullanu, your father's gardener,  
who endlessly brought you baskets of dates  
and every day made the table jubilant.  
You lifted your eyes to him and went to him:  
'My Ishullanu, let us take pleasure in your strength,  
Reach out your hand and touch my vulva!'  
Ishullanu said to you,  
'What do you want from me?  
Mother, if you don't cook, I don't eat.  
Should I eat the bread of bad faith, the food of curses?  
Should I be covered with rushes against the cold?'

You heard his answer.  
You struck him, turned him into a frog.  
You set him to dwell in the middle of the garden,  
where he can move neither upward nor downward.

So you'd love me in my turn and, as with them, set my fate.<sup>85</sup>

When Gilgamesh, having learned from the fates of his predecessors, turned down Ishtar's advances, what did she do? Feeling spurned, she caused her father Anu, god of the heavens and father of the gods, to create a heaven bull which devoured Gilgamesh's warriors, killing hundreds before it was slain by Gilgamesh and Enkidu, his partner in arms. Ah Ishtar, terrible Ishtar; cruel, callous and capricious goddess of love, whose embrace may neither be accepted nor spurned without danger! Ah Ishtar, personification of the terrible core of woman-in-love, as men experience her!

Odysseus, in his encounters with the Sirens, with Calypso and with Circe, survived attempts to lure, trap and hold him prisoner by woman-in-love.

First, who were the Sirens? They were lovely sea maidens who lured men to destruction with songs which men could not resist. Outside of mythology, a siren is any woman on the street, any seductive and destructive *femme fatale*, who fascinates a man with her eyes, her voice, her bearing, or some other riveting action or attribute, and lures him to his ruin in one form or another. Odysseus survived his encounter with the Sirens by waxing up the ears of his ship's crew so as to make them deaf to the songs, and by having himself tied tight to the mast of his ship. He was thus able to enjoy the enchanting songs of the sirens as he sailed past them, without throwing himself into the sea and swimming to them and to his doom.

And what about Calypso? When Odysseus landed on her island, the nymph received him kindly, looked after him, proposed to marry him, and planned to give him immortality and ageless youth, if only he would remain with her for ever. Why did all that not persuade Odysseus to stay? He had other plans. After his years away at the Trojan war, he was keen to get home to his wife and son. Calypso had no sympathy for that. Hoping to habituate him to herself, she plied him with hospitality, and kept him on her island for eight years, kept him there a "cold lover with an ardent dame" (after) "the nymph had long ceased to please."<sup>86</sup> She might have kept him prisoner for the rest of his life had Zeus, king

of the gods, not intervened and ordered her to give him up. Now, no man who loves his liberty, who has other plans for his life, would welcome being held against his wishes, however gently and sumptuously, even with a promise of immortal youth.

Circe was the sorceress who turned men into swine. When Odysseus came to her island, he sent his men out to explore it. They found the home of Circe. She welcomed them, fed them pottage, and then, with a wave of her magic wand, turned them into pigs, and ordered them off to her pigsty for later slaughter. Only Eurylochus escaped to tell Odysseus what had happened. After consulting his gods, who told him how to resist Circe's charms, Odysseus set out to meet Circe and rescue his men.

Let us consider Circe's tricks and how Odysseus countered them. Her first trick was to serve him drugged pottage, which would weaken his resistance to her magic, and then to wave her wand and order him off to the pigsty. When her pottage and wand technique failed, she didn't give up, but tried another trick. She shrieked, fell on her knees, burst into tears, and invited him to her bed, where she planned to rob him of his courage, and so render him susceptible to her magic wand. To counter her tears and sex appeal, Odysseus drew his resolute sword. When capitulating, Circe praised Odysseus, saying: "you must have a heart in your breast that is proof against all enchantment."<sup>87</sup> That was high praise indeed! She added: "I beg you now to put up your sword and come with me to my bed, so that in love and sleep we may learn to trust one another."<sup>88</sup>

The encounter between Circe and Odysseus illustrates that, when tangling with a woman's desire, a man is embattled with a predatory goddess whose appetite is implacable. Any man who would thwart her needs all the guile and discipline of an Odysseus, plus the good counsel of his gods. Any man who would keep his freedom must also be prepared to use violence if need be. Woman, like the slave hunter, wants to live. If you don't want to be captured, you must make it clear that an attempt on your liberty will cost the attempter's life. Nothing less will make her back away and leave you alone.

Note also that it is only in defeat that Circe finally accepts a relationship based on love and trust. Only when a man-hunting woman is persuaded that she cannot enslave you is she prepared to settle for a friendship which, to her nature, is only second best. Alas, a beast of prey does not take easily to fair exchange; a parasite does not take easily

to symbiosis. Men who insist on fairness in relationships with women must have a resolute heart proof against all enchantment, as well as a sharp and ready sword, and the will to use it on any would-be enslaver.

The man-entrapping spirit of Calypso and Circe is echoed in Barbra Streisand's famous lines about a woman in love who would do anything to get a man into her world and hold him within. Man's fear of that entrapment is expressed in this Japanese poem:

Take me in your arms, said the woman.  
The man took her. And remained, for the rest of his life,  
Between her hands.<sup>89</sup>

Women may delight in such a prospect; men, naturally, fear it, and therefore fear women.

The most important lesson from Odysseus's encounters with these women is that the lot of a man in the hands of a woman hungry for a consort depends on him. If he allows himself to be trapped and tamed, his lot will be enslavement; if he stands his ground, he could escape, or at least exact an equitable and symbiotic relationship.

It is perhaps significant that though Odysseus was able, with advice from his guardian gods and goddesses, to scheme his way out of the fangs of Circe, he had to rely on a direct order from Zeus, the all-powerful, to effect his release from Calypso. Does this not suggest that it is more difficult for a man to rescue himself from a courteous and gentle weakener of resolve, like Calypso, than from the not-so-gentle Circes of the world? A woman's soft approach, being less resistable, may be more dangerous to the liberty of a man.

Nevertheless, if a man must choose between a Calypso and a Circe, which should he choose as his mate? Better a Calypso than a Circe, for Calypso's heart is not a block of flint. She knows what pity is; she has some sense of what is fair; and one could negotiate a deal with her. Which is most unlikely with a Circe, whose style of domination is not amenable to negotiation or compromise, not until she is decisively defeated, and perhaps not even then. The wonderful thing about the adventures of Odysseus is that he is a master of ruses, one from whom many survival tricks may be learned. His encounters with the Sirens, with Calypso and with Circe ought to be used to teach standard lessons to adolescent boys as they begin relationships with predatory women.

The Hebrew myth of the Fall of Man is usually read as the story of the fall of the human species, male and female together, from paradise,

and of its banishment to a life of toil and hardship outside the primeval Garden of Eden. But it includes a much more specific fall than that. Its kernel is the story of the fall of *man* below *woman*; of how Adam, originally lord and master over Eve his consort, was pushed, fell and became Eve's slave.

It is the story of a brilliant coup whereby woman, pleading the hardships of pregnancy and childbirth, caused a division of labour which dumped upon man the hard economic tasks and risky adventures of society. For eating the apple given to him by Eve, Adam was condemned to eke out a living by the sweat of his brow, and to sustain his children and his child-bearing consort. Eve's crowning subterfuge was to fix responsibility for the new arrangement on the serpent, Adam and God.

It is only natural that man should fear woman for the success of her fundamental coup. It is natural for man to fear a *femme fatale* who turned the tables of power on him, and consigned him to a life of risks and toil. Given the very strong aversion all primates have to snakes and snake-like forms, it is even more natural for man to fear a person who trafficks with, and is a confidante of, snakes.

These myths encapsulate the male experience of woman as consort. They are sometimes experienced as Ishtar, whose desire may neither be satisfied nor spurned without danger; or as Circe, the enslaving magician; or as the Sirens, the deadly enchantresses; or as Calypso, the gentle imprisoner and weakener of resolve; or as Eve, the temptress who communes with snakes and reduced man to a life of hard labour. Their common lesson to men is: FEAR WOMEN! The average man reacts to them thus: If Adam, the father of all, fell before Eve, who am I to resist a daughter of Eve? Yes, Gilgamesh and Odysseus overcame those dangerous women; but do I have the talents and resolute wills of those heroic men? Yes, indeed, FEAR WOMEN, and if and when they catch you, obey and serve them.

A psychological climate of fear greatly helps the arbitrary ruler. Just as the many, though implicitly stronger, are inhibited from overthrowing their ruler and his handful of guards, so too the cowed man, even if stronger than his woman, is inhibited from freeing himself from her rule. Man's fear of woman establishes a psychological climate in which female power can hold sway without brute force. The operative principle is:

Cow the spirit, awe the mind,  
And you don't have to whip the body.

## 13. The Baby as Wife's Weapon

Once she gets that ring, and gets you one or two issues, and knows you won't want to spoil your reputation, won't want people to say you can't keep your wife, she begins to rule you.

— A rueful Nigerian husband.

A baby is a breathing, bawling, flesh-and-bones club with which a woman can beat a man down to the ground, and compel him to toil for her. Even an embryonic baby, a mere speck of a foetus in her womb, will do just fine when a woman wants to bend a man to her will. When she gets tired of supporting herself, she can throw her cares unto some hapless man by getting herself pregnant by him, knowing full well that it would take a most heartless man to abandon their child, and that where the baby goes, she, its mother and nurse, would tag along. That is why their baby is probably a wife's ultimate tool for getting, holding and exploiting her husband.

A woman who tricks a man into getting her pregnant knows that, however reluctant he may be to become her nest slave, she can count on the baby's arrival to weaken his resolve. First, the baby will pull on its father's heartstrings in a way which nothing else can. His protective feelings for the helpless doughball, his sense of responsibility for the tender half-creature of his loins, will make it difficult for him to chase away the mother to whose breast the suckling clings so desperately. Secondly, his male peers will pressure him to do his duty by the child, regardless of whatever hostility he may feel towards its mother for tricking him. Though animosity may grow between him and her, he will be urged to stay with her for the baby's sake. Which is why a baby is a powerful man-trapping weapon in a woman's hands.

If a baby's little clenched fist can so tenaciously hold an unwilling man for its mother, imagine what it can do for her if the man willingly helped in making the baby. Beside his instinctive protectiveness toward

his helpless infant; beside his fear of social censure should the infant suffer neglect, a third factor would come into play, namely, his own reasons for wanting the child. If he wanted it out of a desire for an heir, or a successor, or an immortalizer of his name, his ambition would be defeated should anything adverse happen to the child. But wouldn't the child's future be endangered if its mother should neglect or abandon it? Would he ever forgive himself if his own conduct gave her an excuse to abandon or neglect the child? Because of his ambitions for the child, the baby becomes a powerful instrument of blackmail in his wife's hands.

Therein lies the significance for a mother of the arrival of her first born. It is an event which confirms and magnifies the powers a wife acquired at her wedding. That is why it is a celebrated moment in her career. Consider this excerpt from a song titled "A Mother to her First-born":

O my child, now indeed I am happy.  
Now indeed I am a wife —  
No more a bride, but a Mother-of-one.  
Be splendid and magnificent, child of desire.  
Be proud, as I am proud.  
Be happy, as I am happy.  
Be loved, as now I am loved.  
Child, child, child, love I have had from my man;  
But now, only now, have I the fullness of love.  
Now, only now, am I his wife and the mother of his first-born.  
His soul is safe in your keeping, my child, and it was I,I,I, who  
have made you.

Therefore am I loved.  
Therefore am I happy.  
Therefore am I a wife.  
Therefore have I great honour.

You will tend his shrine when he is gone.  
With sacrifice and oblation you will recall his name year by  
year.

He will live in your prayers, my child,  
And there will be no more death for him, but everlasting life  
springing from your loins.  
You are his shield and spear, his hope and redemption from  
the dead.

Through you he will be reborn, as the saplings in the Spring.  
And I, I am the mother of his first-born.  
Sleep, child of beauty and courage and fulfilment, sleep.  
I am content.<sup>90</sup>

The song expresses the mother's happiness, and her sense of fulfilment, at the coming of her first-born. She rejoices because of the power which her first-born gives her over her husband. That power, she knows, comes from the duties which a father expects his first-born to perform for him, including keeping alive his name and freshening his memory among humanity after his physical death. Knowing that, she knows that their child is her certificate of entitlement to its father's support. She knows that she now holds him by something that is even stronger than law, custom and public opinion, namely his own ambitions. That is why she is now happy and content. Yes, indeed: a woman grabs a man by his balls, and then holds him securely by *their* baby.

A baby is not simply a strategic, long term weapon in its mother's hands; it is also a tactically useful whip in the daily battles between husband and wife. Should he fail to satisfy her demands, she can vex his heart by neglecting it. She may even threaten to walk off with the child, and give pain to his fatherly feelings. Or she may threaten to walk off alone, leaving him with the job of caring for it. Any sentimentalist who doubts that a mother could neglect her own child in order to punish its father need only be reminded of the babies abandoned in gutters by their ever-loving mothers! A mother who could abandon her baby, when it sufficiently inconvenienced her, is quite capable of neglecting or maiming it when she wants to blackmail or punish its father.

Should the father of the child, for his part, attempt to leave its mother, she may threaten to deny him all future access to it. If he calls her bluff, she may punish him by killing the child. Those who doubt that a vengeful mother could go that far ought to recall the story where Medea slaughtered her own children to revenge herself on their father, Jason, when he left her for another wife. Such are some of the ways in which a mother uses their baby to whip her husband into line.

The whip which a baby puts into its mother's hand is not just metaphorical; it is sometimes quite literal. In this example from Nigeria, a man in his forties was pressured by his mother to marry again, after eight happy years of divorce. The new wife, who was young enough to be her husband's daughter, became his whip-wielding, slave-driving boss once she had a child by him:

The general consensus was for me to take an extremely younger wife. Someone I could bring up myself (whatever they meant by that) and someone who would respect my age.

When I met the girl I eventually married, she was fresh out of the College of Technology and only twenty-two. She was six months pregnant when we finally got married. I explained the type of job I had to her. Explained the erratic hours and the unconventional friends I kept. She promised she would try to cope.

After she had her baby, she suddenly believed she had two feet firmly on the ground. She started nagging about the late hours I kept, the stench of booze on my breath every night I came home, and the fact that she couldn't stand my rowdy friends. They disturbed the baby's nap.

Things finally came to a head the day I got home at two in the morning to find her waiting for me. As soon as I let myself in I felt the crack of the whip! I couldn't believe it. As she used the whip over and over again, she shrieked hysterically at me for being inconsiderate, for leaving her alone in the house with an infant while I carried on as if I were a bachelor!

That did it! I took my things and left and that was it. I still see her whenever I need to give her maintenance money, but that's all. I can't stand that kind of life.<sup>91</sup>

All in all, one might well wonder if many a woman would not avoid baby-making altogether were babies not invaluable for tying a man down to support her good self, even after a separation or divorce.

## 14. The Penalties of Divorce

There are, of course, many reasons for divorce, but chief among them seems to be the growing aversion and hostility that men have for the feminine mill-stone hanging around their necks.<sup>92</sup>

— Betty Friedan

I never knew what real happiness was until I got married. And by then it was too late.<sup>93</sup>

— Max Kauffmann

For a sane man, divorce is the legal exit route from the nest slavery of marriage. In any given society, whether this exit route from marital misery is inviting or daunting depends on the obstacles and penalties with which it is surrounded.

In strict Mohammedan countries, like Saudi Arabia, where matriarch power is probably at its weakest in the world, divorce is not very difficult for a man to obtain. In strict Roman Catholic societies, where matriarch power is probably at its strongest in the world, divorce is prohibited by either secular or religious law, or by both: a man's only escape routes from nest-slavery are, therefore, the illegal ones, namely, desertion, wife murder, or suicide.

Where there is an absolute legal or moral sanction against divorce, marriage becomes, for the husband, a form of life imprisonment, with the hard labour of carrying a talking and nagging millstone around his neck. Where divorce is allowed, but is hedged with discriminatory penalties against the husband (e.g. alimony; child custody rules that are weighted in the mother's favour; the ouster of the husband from his family house; the loss of half his estate to his wife; social censure; etc), such penalties can keep a husband trapped for life in his wife's nest.

Consider the plight of a man who goes naively into marriage, expecting happiness ever after, only to discover that his happy days are already behind him! When the bride he wedded has turned into a decorative presence, a nagging harridan, a heartless slave driver, and a financial millstone; when the sex-for-the-asking he was led to expect is no longer forthcoming, either because the sex-eager fiance has turned into a frigid wife, or because she has gone off him and taken on outside lovers; when the love mists have cleared from his eyes, and he sees that his home is his prison; and when he contemplates making a break for freedom: in that moment of truth he has to consider what divorce would cost him.

Against remaining in nest-slavery, he will weigh the following:

- 1) the vexation of making alimony payments with which she will support herself and some new lover;
- 2) the humiliation of being ousted from the house he built or has bought, and seeing it turned over to the woman he no longer loves;
- 3) the penalty of losing half of his estate to her, an estate he either inherited or won with his sweat;
- 4) the fear of her getting custody of their child, with him having to endure a partial or total loss of access to it;
- 5) the fear of social censure, with loss of prestige, in a society that will view him as a weak man who could not keep his wife.

Caught between the prospect of unhappiness-ever-after under the lash of his slave-driving harridan, and the certainty of such wounding penalties and humiliations, the average male, with his super-fragile ego, would choose divorce only as the last alternative to going insane, or to suicide, or to murdering his enslaver and being hanged for it.

Once a wife is satisfied that her husband cannot divorce her, either because divorce is illegal or theologically frightening, or because it is too costly financially and psychologically, she gets her licence to be as heartless a slave-driver as she likes. She will mercilessly drive him to the brink of desertion, insanity, murder or suicide before pulling back. It is in this way that the harsh penalties surrounding divorce, penalties which make his jailbreak forbiddingly costly, are exploited to keep a husband trapped in nest slavery. The men who, as legislators, pass such divorce laws, or who, as priests, decree divorce a sin, are indeed heartless jailkeepers to all husbands within their jurisdictions.

## Part V

## **Matriarchy and its Discontents**

## 15. The Matriarch: Sovereign of Her Nest

Disguise our bondage as we will,<sup>94</sup>  
Tis woman, woman rules us still.

— Thomas Moore

Whatever power it is that woman wields knows no bounds.<sup>95</sup>

— Thinking Corner, NATIONAL CONCORD (Lagos).

As we have by now seen, contrary to what some feminists would have the world believe, female power exists, every man alive is under its sway, wives rule and exploit their husbands, and the domination of man by woman is not "an inversion of fact". Let me recapitulate.

Motherpower takes charge of a boy-child at his birth, when he cannot contest it. Luckily for him, it is the protective mode of female power, and has a benign texture. At puberty, however, motherpower begins to wane, though its grip on him never completely vanishes while he lives.

At puberty, a boy's hormones shove him into the arena of bridepower where he is raided by the nest-making woman looking for a nest-slave. Behold the slave-huntress armed with the weapon of female beauty. See her prowling the promenade, eyes out for a suitable catch. See her lure him with her body bait. As he follows, desperate for a bite, see her smite him with her love harpoon and derange his mind. See her lead the smitten prey through a courtship maze, stopping here and there to rub him with balms that calm his anxious nerves, till he is well and truly tame. Now see them exit from the maze. See her gather him up in her wedding net; see her hold the net aloft, displaying to all what she has caught. See her march off to her nest, holding the newly-won slave by the matrimonial yoke around his neck.

Behold the new husband, our brawny and brainy one, smiling as he is led into the fortress of wifepower. There he is, a little while later, tied down to his nest duties by the featus in her bulging womb. With the power she gathered on their wedding day at last confirmed by the birth of their child, watch him now toil without cease for his nest queen and her nest. Whatever wealth he reaps he must bring home to his ruler; if he wins honour or fame, he must share its privileges with her.

Behold how she now rules him, using the tricks she inherited from her predecessors in husband management. Behold how she exploits him through a covert matriarchy that wears a patriarchal mask; through the formidable handicaps imposed on him by a hallowed double standard; through his ingrained fear of women, whom he sees as mysterious beings; through his silly soul that is befogged by sentimental illusions; through their baby whom she wields as a weapon against him. Behold how she keeps him trapped, through the mighty penalties which law and custom have decreed against him in the event of a divorce, penalties which a thwarted slave-holder would most vengefully enforce.

Yes, indeed! Where, on any day of his life, does a man evade the sway of female power?

In the course of a woman's life, she first exercises bridepower in order to win wifepower and motherpower for herself. These latter powers she holds conjointly in her ultimate position as married mother or matriarch. As matriarch, she rules her husband through her powers both as his wife and as the mother of their children.

The nest, that terminus of bridepower, that locus of both wifepower and motherpower, is woman's sovereign estate; and the nest queen or matriarch is its monarch. Accordingly, the politics of the nest is the politics of a monarch's court, with her courtiers (her husband and children) competing for her approval and favours. Matriarch power is exercised over them as she distributes the resources, commodities and opportunities which her husband procures for her domain. Her control of the womb, kitchen and cradle in her nest gives her the power to decide who shall do or get what. Her authority in her nest is buttressed by custom, law, habit, education, propaganda, sanctions and rewards. While her children are her dependent wards, her husband is simply her consort, and her one-man-ministerial cabinet which helps her exercise her monarchical powers. With all her court being subject to or dependent upon her, a matriarch is a monarch — sometimes benevolent,

sometimes malevolent, sometimes constitutional, sometimes despotic — but a monarch nonetheless, with sovereign powers over her nest.

Indeed, like any potentate, a matriarch wields over her court powerful weapons of persuasion and coercion. She can suggest or command or nag-nag-nag. She can quietly veto any of her husband's decisions which do not suit her. She can reduce the flow of her favours, or cut it off altogether. She can expel recalcitrant members from her nest — boys by sending them off to borstal or its equivalents; her husband by divorcing him, and on punitive terms.

Such is the power of a nest queen that it is far more difficult for her subjects to withdraw from her nest than it is for a citizen to emigrate from a state. A boy-child may run away from home, but the matriarchist laws and customs of the larger society will seek to return him to his mother. If a husband absconds, the matriarchist laws of the larger society will seek to return him to his nest duties, and to punish him for nest desertion; and should he decide to quit his nest duties permanently, he may find himself paying wife and child support dues in lieu of services he has chosen to default on. In contrast, only in cases of serious crime is an emigrant from a state extradited back for trial and punishment; and only by totalitarian tyrannies are emigrants treated as they are by matriarchs — as traitors and defectors.

Like all secure and hallowed despotisms, matriarch power does not show its harsh aspect unless it is either flagrantly thwarted, or on the verge of being cast off. When a husband attempts to break from the yoke of matriarch power, he is liable to be severely punished: he is either wilfully denied a divorce, so he can be imprisoned in the nest and tortured, or he is made to pay a grievous price for the divorce.

Casting back to the issues raised in the prologue, some questions can now be addressed. Why does female power not manifest itself through councils of matriarchs or other large and formal organizations? In the absence of such organizations, in what sense could one still speak of matriarchy? And why has conventional knowledge failed to acknowledge female power?

If female power does not operate through large, formal organizations, it is because it doesn't need to. As this inquiry has shown, female power has different purposes from male power, and it has resources peculiar to it. Since function and context help to determine form, we ought not to be surprised that the structures of female power differ significantly from those of male power.

Since the cardinal aim of female power is the procurement and management of a nest-slave by a nest-queen; and since, as we have seen, this one-on-one control operates mainly through intimate psychological manipulation; female power does not need those elaborate structures of formal authority which have evolved to control the large aggregates of persons required by the specialist activities of the male domain — namely, hunting and war and their modern extensions. In particular, grand councils of matriarchs are not necessary for the effective exercise of female power.

As we have seen from this inquiry, marriage is the central institution of female power — not political parties, parliaments, armies, business enterprises, bureaucracies, etc. The nest or family home, where a woman is both mother and wife, is the seat of female power — not barracks, factories, offices or other such places where large numbers of persons gather to work together. In making marriage its central institution, female power has chosen the organizational form most suited to its nature and its needs.

As buttresses to the marriage institution, female power also operates informal consultative bodies like sororities, kaffee klatches, gossip groups, and associations of the wives of generals, politicians, businessmen, etc. These suffice for exchanges of ideas on how to manage men, and for conspiracies against men which each wife then implements on her husband.

Even where women have thought it useful to have their own organs of political authority (female councils which are counterweights to male councils), these are auxiliary to the central institution of female power. Whatever powers all-female councils wield are extra to the overwhelming powers which women wield through marriage.

Because of the functional and contextual differences between female power and male power, matriarchy cannot be properly defined as what would obtain if women were substituted for men in patriarchal structures. To avoid the confusions of over-sophistication, we need to remind ourselves that, in down-to-earth terms, matriarchy and patriarchy are, respectively, mother-rule and father-rule. We need, therefore, to define them, each in terms of the realities of power and authority in the nest organization. Let us begin with some preliminaries.

A nest (mother, father and children) has two heads: a female head and a male head. A *matriarch* is the female head of a nest. A *patriarch* is the male head of a nest. Unlike a pair of Roman consuls, these two

heads are not co-equal in power and authority. Whereas the matriarch is the real head, with more of the actual power, the patriarch is the figurehead, with more of the aura of authority. Indeed, the matriarch holds the power behind the authority of the patriarch. Now to the main definitions.

*Matriarchy* is a form of social organization in which the female head of a nest exercises dominant power in it, while the male head is her lieutenant who operates its formal machinery of authority.

*Patriarchy* is a form of social organization in which the male head of a nest operates its formal machinery of authority, while giving the impression of exercising dominant power in it.

These definitions, I submit, capture the realities far better than the conventional ones accepted by anthropologists and sociologists. For example, this definition of matriarch does not require us to treat the idea of a matriarch as a joke; nor does it place us in the quandary of denying the name to those matrons who, in addition to exercising dominant power, also wield familial authority in the style usual for patriarchs. Such a matron is like a monarch who also acts as her own prime minister.

Secondly, on this definition of matriarchy, women do not have to exercise any formal authority in order for a social system to be matriarchal. Where women confine themselves to exercising power within the marriage institution, we have a matriarchal system. If they, in addition, operate all-female associations that exercise political powers that are zoned to women, then the scope of matriarchy in that system is enlarged. So long as women exercise dominant power somewhere in the social system, that system is matriarchal, for it features mother-rule.

Thirdly, matriarchy and patriarchy, as now defined, can co-exist, as they indeed do in actual societies, the latter mostly as the authority system for routinely applying the power of the former. A society cannot, therefore, be either "strictly matriarchal" or "strictly patriarchal"; rather, a society can have matriarchal and patriarchal subsystems, and these usually complement each other. The notion that a society has to be either entirely ruled by mothers or entirely ruled by fathers is a piece of over-sophisticated nonsense. In reality, mother-rule and father-rule each has its own sphere in each society: some powers are in the keep of mothers, and other powers are in the keep of fathers.

It ought to be noted here that, in any organization, there are front structures of formal authority as well as back channels of unformalized

power. In society as a whole, whereas the patriarchal subsystem specializes in the front structures of authority, the matriarchal subsystem specializes in back channel power. The supremacy of the matriarchal subsystem explains why, even in an all-male organization, advancement comes easier to those men who are championed by the wives, mistresses, daughters and female confidantes of powerful men — i.e. by women who are nominally not even part of the organization.

Why has female power proved elusive to conventional observers and investigators? It is not surprising that they fail to find female power who expect its manifestations to be mirror images of those of male power. After all, an anthropologist or sociologist who is looking for elephants is not likely to find any, even while standing in the midst of a herd of elephants, if he believes that an elephant is built like, and flies like, an eagle. If the consensus of the experts is that neither matriarchs nor matriarchy exists, and hence that female power does not exist, then theirs is a consensus of errors based on unwarranted analogies and inappropriate definitions. And as history has all too often shown, the consensus is not always correct.

It is typical of feminists not only to deny female power, but to specifically deny matriarch power. For example, Germaine Greer has declared:

If you look at wives in general they don't have much power over their husbands. Most of them have only the vaguest notion of what their husbands are doing.<sup>96</sup>

That second sentence may well be true; however, their ignorance of what their husbands are doing does not prove that wives have no power over their husbands. After all, the Chairman of the Board of a corporation need not have more than the vaguest notion of what his field technicians are doing; yet he has power over them, and they work for him. And as the anti-feminist woman, Esther Vilar, has illuminatingly put it:

Women are to the world what stockholders are to corporations: although they understand nothing of what is involved, and although they themselves do nothing for the corporation, everything that is done is being done in their interest.<sup>97</sup>

**Yes, to have others work in your interest, isn't that power indeed?**

An acknowledgement of matriarch power will necessarily affect our understanding of society's power structure. In the standard perception, elite men are the lords of society. Once matriarch power is taken into account, and it is acknowledged that elite women (as mothers and wives to elite men) rule elite men, it then has to be conceded that the topmost layer in society's power heirarchy is occupied by elite women. The grand matriarchs (the Nancy Reagans, Clementine Churchills, Livia and Lady Macbeths of history and fiction), who rule the grand patriarchs who rule the world, are indeed the overall bosses of the world. The relationship between grand patriarchs and grand matriarchs is this: the former, like a management team, run society in the interest of the latter who are, indeed, society's supreme stockholders.

When we acknowledge matriarch power, we are obliged to admit that matriarchy, a system in which ultimate power in society resides with matriarchs, is the human norm. Yes, penultimate power and the structures of authority may be in the hands of patriarchs, but ultimate power lies in the laps of matriarchs. As the Igbo say: Mother is supreme. It has been so since the original division of labour by gender which took place at the beginning of human society; it remains so to this day. Contrary to conventional opinion, matriarchy operates everywhere, no matter how ubiquitous the facade of patriarchy may be.

The grand matriarch enjoys, at its most spectacular level, what every married mother enjoys, and every man-hunting woman aspires to. In this sense, the overwhelming majority of women are matriarchists, for their life ideal is to be matriarchs. Most women like being women, they are keen to get husbands to support them in the style they aspire to, and they wouldn't like to be men, or to live the way men do.

I once asked a Lagos girl why she liked being a woman. She replied: As a woman, you can afford to be lazy and still be fed and clothed and taken care of. And you don't even have to be beautiful; you just make yourself attractive. If you don't have money, your boyfriend will give you money. Men give money to their girlfriends; girls don't give money to their boyfriends.

Asked why she was keenly looking for a husband, a young Nigerian woman journalist said:

Seek ye first a husband, and everything else shall be added unto you. Instead of hunting for a house and a car, you find a husband and he'll give you the house and car, and do so on his knees.

Asked what she thought of a man's life, a young Nigerian woman said: "To be a man is punishment".

In another encounter, a young Nigerian school leaver, who had just been spouting bits and pieces of feminist propaganda about how it is all "a man's world," was cornered with the question:

'In your next incarnation, would you like to come as a man?'

'Do you think I want a life of suffering?', she exclaimed without hesitation.

Asked whether she would like to be a man, Miriam Ikejiani, a Nigerian university lecturer in Political Science, declared:

Certainly not. I enjoy being a woman. I enjoy being attractive and being pampered. I also enjoy getting what I want because I'm a woman. I enjoy looking after my children as well as cooking.<sup>98</sup>

One evening, in a London brasserie, an English woman firmly told another, who was half her age and full of feminist chatter: "I like being a kept woman." This happened when the man they were with offered to buy them drinks and the young feminist insisted on paying for her own.

Why were these women, like so many, so gladly attached to woman's way of life and so unattracted to man's life? Well, woman's way of life is full of exemptions from unpleasant things like the burdens and anxieties of public office; like the biting cold of winter lumbering in the frozen forests; like the heat and dust and dangers of coal and gold mines deep in the bowels of the earth; like the mud and wounds and bloody stench of battlefields. Women are routinely exempted from such unpleasant things which men may not shirk. These hallowed exemptions do not in the least interfere with a woman's right to share the pleasures of the wealth, fame and status which the men in her life (father, brothers,

husbands, lovers) secure by the very toil and high risks she is exempted from.

These privileges, which are available to all women, turn the lives of grand matriarchs (who enjoy them at the highest level) into the closest thing to paradise on earth. Unsurprisingly, the cardinal aim of elite matriarchs is to preserve the social arrangements which bestow these paradisiac privileges upon all women. And in furthering this aim, they can count on the support of the matriarchist majority of women.

## 16. Feminism: A Revolt in Paradise

I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.<sup>99</sup>

— The "voice within women", as reported by Betty Friedan.

Women's liberation is just a lot of foolishness. It's the men who are discriminated against. They can't bear children. And no one's likely to do anything about that.<sup>100</sup>

— Golda Meir

Despite woman's paradise of privileges — privileges anchored on the womb, privileges of which most women are fully and happily aware — feminists claim that women are powerless, and are oppressed by men. They have therefore demanded a reorganization of society on the basis of equality between men and women. They say they want a world without roles assigned by gender: a world in which women share power and work and status equally with men — in the home and outside it, in the kitchen and in the office; in minding the mess and confusion of the children's play pen, and in managing the crises and disasters in the corridors of public power.

If indeed human society is basically matriarchal, despite its patriarchal facade; if woman is indeed man's boss; if most women know that their lives are quite privileged compared to the lives of their men, what then is one to make of feminism and its egalitarian programme?

To help us assess feminism, we ought to note that, in their attitudes to men, there are three basic types of women: the matriarchists, the tomboys and the termagants. A *matriarchist* is a woman who believes that a man's natural or god-ordained role in life is to serve some matriarch or married mother; and that the best way to get full service out of him is to make him think that he is his matriarch's boss. A *tomboy* is a woman who would rather be a man. A *termagant* is a woman,

whether tomboy or quasi-matriarchist, who insists on showing her man that she, not he, is boss; she therefore takes sadistic pleasure in harassing and bossing men.

Most women, down through history, have been matriarchist. Tomboys there have always been, but most, at puberty, reconciled themselves to the matriarchist social arrangements which suited the overwhelming majority of women. Termagants, the man-hating, temperamental misfits in the matriarchist paradise, there have always been. Incensed by the facade of patriarchy, they would vent on the hapless men around them their resentment of the matriarchist requirement that women make believe that they are ruled by men.

Feminism is a movement of bored matriarchists, frustrated tomboys and natural termagants; each of these types has its reasons for being discontented in the matriarchist paradise that is woman's traditional world. Indeed, the career of post WWII feminism may be summarized as follows:

Bored matriarchists (like Betty Friedan) and frustrated tomboys (like Simone de Beauvoir) kicked it off;

Termagants (like Andrea Dworkin) made a public nuisance of it;

Satisfied matriarchists (like Phyllis Schlafly) oppose it;

Non-militant tomboys (the female yuppies) have quietly profited from it.

Friedanite feminism began by giving public voice to the craving by bored, wealthy, suburban American housewives for "something more than my husband and my children and my home." Much of feminism has been inspired by this desire for something better than the matriarchist paradise; however, feminists find it politically expedient to present their aggrandizing demands in the language of liberation from oppression. But it is hard, without standing the word "oppression" on its head, to fathom how their boredom, an affliction of the leisured and the idle rich, can be taken as a product of oppression. It takes Orwellian doublespeak to say that such a wife is oppressed by the husband whose income makes possible her leisured life. And if the idle rich are oppressed, then what are slaves, peons, and the like?

What Friedanite feminism proves is that what to most women is paradise\*, to some women is hell; that any paradise can bore some to

rebellion. Such a rebellion is the subject of this bizarre story from Switzerland, which is aptly titled "Pampered Wife Wants Divorce":

A housewife has filed for divorce claiming her hubby made her miserable — by doing too much work around the house!

The Zurich, Switzerland, woman — identified only as Susan — said she had absolutely nothing to do and was totally demoralized after six years of living with her husband Karl and being waited on hand and foot.

In court papers, she said her 42-year-old office worker husband returned from his job every day and started work all over again — cleaning house, according to accounts in the Swiss newspaper *Blick*.

'As soon as Karl comes back from work the devil is loose at home,' the unhappy wife, 36, said. 'He takes the vacuum cleaner and runs it through the whole apartment, washes all the dishes, cooks and then puts the two kids to bed. Karl never said anything against my housework, but he came home and did it all over again. It really makes me feel dispensable.'

The couple have two children, aged 2 and 3, and until Susan moved out several months ago, they lived together in a comfortable suburban apartment. Susan, a former nurse, stayed home with the children while Karl went off to work every day.

But when Karl came home at night, the couple's normal family life took a bizarre twist. The energetic husband played housewife for hours, Susan said, and even brought her breakfast in bed.

'He even ironed my blouse', Susan testified. 'I told him to stop, but he said he did it to make me look better. I put up with this for five years, all this strange behaviour. But then Karl started learning to knit and it was just too much for me.'

Susan said her housekeeping hubby refused to switch places with her, so she could go out and work.

That's when she decided she needed a divorce.<sup>101</sup>

Had this Swiss Susan been a true matriarchist, she would have been deliriously happy at having acquired a super-workaholic nest slave; she would have regarded herself as the blessed of the blest. Had she been an American Friendanite, she would have screamed that she was being

oppressed; and instead of filing for a divorce and making her personal exit from a boring paradise, she would have declared that "the personal is political", and demonstrated for women's lib, and campaigned for the ERA.

Anyway, however dubious the "oppressed" status of Friendanite feminists was, once their banner was unfurled, tomboys and termagants were powerfully drawn to it. Under the banner of feminism, the militant tomboy, who would rather be a man, vents her frustration on men instead of appealing to god or the surgeon for a sex change. Under the banner of feminism, the non-militant tomboy goes on to become a yuppie, a business or political entrepreneur, glad for a social climate in which, when she plays male roles, she encounters less resistance than previous generations of tomboys did. She goes into previously all-male fields, and still uses to full advantage all the skills and weapons of female power.

The termagant (the shrew, scold and harridan of old) is a misandrous sadist whose greatest pleasures come from man-baiting and man-bashing. She resents the matriarchist code which would have her pretend that she is not boss to her man. Under the banner of feminism she can fully blossom. The termagant now carries on her man-harassing and man-bossing without restraint, battering a man's ears with blows from her tongue without fear of retaliation by blows from his fist. The termagant claims for herself a tyrant's absolute freedom of conduct, and would punish any reaction, however natural, she provokes from men. She is the type of woman who would wear a miniskirt without panties, a see-through blouse without bras, and swing her legs and wiggle her arse as she parades up and down the street, and yet insist that no man should get excited by her provocative sexual display. Any man who whistles at the sight is berated for male chauvinism. She would put out all male eyes with white-hot iron spits so they would not subject the naked female to "the male gaze". She is so outraged by male energy and exhuberance that she would have all males between 15 and 35 put in prison, just to spare women their attentions.<sup>102</sup> If she flirts and teases and leads an adolescent boy on, well beyond the limits of his self-control, and he rapes her, she would demand that he be hanged. The only males she would have in the world are lobotomized robots and enervated poodles, all at her beck and call. Under the guise of "radical feminism", some termagants, in their utter misandry, have retreated into lesbian ghettos, and from there attack, as traitors to womankind, those other

women who are heterosexual, and who do not totally refrain from social and sexual intercourse with men. Under the banner of feminism, all this is treated as legitimate human behaviour.

The matriarchist — as the nest-queen who happily trains, rules and enjoys the income of the male head of her house — is largely unpersuaded by feminist demands for an equality which would end her privileges. As the prime beneficiaries of the system which feminists would dismantle, the quiet army of satisfied matriarchists is the great immovable rock upon which the tidal wave of feminism spends its fury.

Though feminism parades itself as a revolt against the domination of women by men, it is in fact a revolt by some tomboys against some of women's privileges within the matriarchist paradise, and a revolt by termagants against the matriarchist restraints on their freedom to tyrannize males. However, despite basing their campaign on the principle of gender equality, only a few feminists, a rare few who recognize a need for consistency and fairness, go so far as to accept that the equality they demand must apply also in the trenches, battlefields, mines and other high risk and strenuous areas of life. For the rest, their egalitarian clamour is simply a ruse, and they scheme to head men off from insisting on its full scale implementation.

Most men did not see feminist egalitarianism as the ruse that it was. Of the few who did, a mere handful glimpsed that feminism was not a revolt against oppression by men, but a clamour for additional privileges and opportunities for women. Such men began that men's liberation movement which drew the ire of feminists like Carol Hanisch. However, lacking an analysis of female power, the men's liberation movement did not get very far. Most men, being machos, were thoroughly indoctrinated in the view that men rule women, that human societies are strictly patriarchal: they did not, therefore, take seriously the idea that men needed liberating. At best, they saw men's liberation as a practical joke to annoy feminists.

Many non-feminist women understood the ruse in the egalitarian campaign of the feminists. While they were, understandably, less than eager to join a campaign which could endanger their paradise of traditional privileges, it was also not in their interest to expose it. In fact, for so long as feminism brought new opportunities to women, but without endangering traditional female privileges, many women were sympathetic to it. But when it became clear that gender equality might threaten their traditional privileges (by, for example, requiring women

to be drafted into infantry platoons), feminism lost many of its female sympathizers and fellow travellers.

In the USA, that threat emerged with the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the US Constitution. Some elite matriarchs then decided to safeguard women's privileges from the ravages of feminism. Turning militant, they took to the streets and campaign trails and mobilized the matriarchist majority of women to defeat the ERA.

These militant matriarchists, these "right-wing women" (as Andrea Dworkin calls them), disagree profoundly with the feminist picture of women's lot. Some hold that women are "in a superior position, and that this superior position was not to be traded for an equal position".<sup>103</sup> They opposed the ERA because, if it was passed, "girls would have to go to war",<sup>104</sup> and ERA would force women "to take responsibility for decision making and for money".<sup>105</sup> One of them told Andrea Dworkin that "pro-ERA women are ignorant and malicious," and that "pro-ERA feminists do not know what the interests of women are."<sup>106</sup> She outlined them as "a strong home and strong laws protecting the family in which the man, not the state, protects the woman".<sup>107</sup> What the anti-ERA women fought to protect was the traditional matriarchist arrangement where the husband takes responsibility for decision making, for earning the family income, and for the safety of his wife's nest. So many women wanted that arrangement preserved that they helped to stop the feminist tide at the gates of the ERA.

In the view of the aroused matriarchists, feminism is a revolt in paradise; and the feminist rebels jeopardise the ancient matriarchist privileges of all women. As a result, despite advertising itself as a movement for the liberation of women, feminism has provoked the opposition of the matriarchist majority of women, and has therefore remained a minority movement.

The triumph of the anti-ERA campaign was only partly due to matriarchist fears of losing traditional privileges. It also capitalized on the resentments felt by many women who deplored the changes which feminism had brought to their lives. This resentment can be encountered in many parts of the world. For example, a London upper-middle-class wife denounced feminism for making her lot worse than her mother's had been. Her mother had not been obliged to take a job and earn money; but she herself had to, since men of her class, well tutored by feminism, now expected their wives to work and earn money. As she and most matriarchists see it, that a husband now helped in the

kitchen, or changed nappies, or pushed prams, is pitiful compensation for a wife's loss of the privilege to stay home, out of the rat race, and be supported by a man in the style to which she was accustomed.

Another London woman complained that feminism had killed off gallantry, and so a man no longer felt obliged to give up his seat on a crowded bus to a woman, however heavily laden she might be with briefcase, cosmetic handbag, and bulging grocery sacks.

Even some yuppie feminists, who have taken advantage of the new opportunities to rise in fields traditionally reserved for men, have become impatient with radical feminists, whose continuing clamour could provoke a male backlash and jeopardise their yuppie gains. They would therefore like to see radical feminism curbed or laid to rest. One of these, magazine editor Debbie Raymond, recently said:

Women today have never had it so good. We can stay at home and look after hubby and the kids. We can go out and get a job. It's all equal opportunity... take our clothes off or keep them on, the world is a woman's oyster. So what the heck is the problem?<sup>108</sup>

In growing despair at the declining support for their cause among women of all kinds, radical feminists (especially the lesbian luddites among them) have taken to denouncing non-feminist women (or those they feel are not feminist enough); they call them cowards, traitors, collaborators, subalterns and dupes of men!

However, despite losing momentum since the defeat of the ERA in the USA, feminism has succeeded, world wide, in enlarging women's opportunities without reducing their traditional privileges. Both in the home and outside it, the world has indeed become a woman's oyster. The matriarchist social system has been obliged to accommodate the aspirations of tomboys, and to legitimize the man-bashing propensities of termagants. And since no country has taken feminist egalitarian propaganda seriously enough to actually send boys and girls, side by side, into battlefields, women have improved their paradise without paying the price demanded by the feminist doctrine of gender equality.

However, the fears of the matriarchists who opposed the ERA still remain: whenever men take a full and clear-eyed stock of the results of feminism, they may still insist on gender equality in every field, including the battlefield. Most women, of course, dread that day.

## *Epilogue:*

### **On Masculinism**

If the standard privileges of women make the world of elite matriarchs the closest thing on earth to paradise, then men, on whose risks and effort women's privileges rest, are the helots of woman's world. Even the grand patriarchs are but headmen among the helots; each is merely the chief public agent for the grand matriarch whose nest he serves. When some in paradise rebel against their condition, what should the helots do? Would it be unreasonable of them to revolt?

To understand why men have not yet revolted in the wake of feminism, we ought to note that, in their attitudes to women, there are three basic types of men: the macho, the musho, and the masculinist. A *macho* is a brawny, and sometimes brainy, factotum who has been bred for nest slavery, and who is indoctrinated to believe that he is the lord and master of the woman who rules him. A *musho* is a henpecked version of the macho who hangs like a bleeding worm between the beaks of his nest queen. A *masculinist* is a man who is devoted to male liberty, and who would avoid nest slavery.

All through history, the overwhelming majority of men have been machos; a henpecked minority have been mushos; and very few have been masculinists. As feminism won prominence, and brought greater social acceptability to termagants, more and more men have come under their influence, and become mushos. On the other hand, stung by feminist accusations, a very tiny minority of men have re-examined the male condition, found it to be nest slavery, and have rebelled and turned masculinist.

The macho (or male chauvinist, or manly man) is a strutting factotum with bulging biceps, stone-dry eyes, brains that are ruled by his gonads, and an ego indoctrinated to believe that he is the lord and master of the woman who rules him. His psyche is primed to defend his woman's

supposed honour from other men's advances. Thoroughly conditioned to serve women, his life satisfaction comes from loyally serving his nest queen. Naturally, he is the matriarchist's ideal man. When young, he suffers from the delusion that he is stronger, cleverer, and naturally superior to the woman who controls him. However, an older and wiser macho, if obliged to confess the truth, might say: "I am the captain of this ship, and I have the permission of my wife to say so." But by then, it is too late for him to be anything but a habitual macho.

The modern musho (the new or feminal man) is one of that breed of diffident men who have been bullied, guilt-tripped, ego-bashed and penis-twisted into pram pushing, diaper changing and breast envy. He is the befuddled, henpecked male who lacks the wit to recognize his male interest. He is one of those male wives of female husbands who have been described, in Julie Burchill's apt phrases, as the "bleeding hearts" and "crying males" who make up "the walking wounded" of the modern sex war.<sup>109</sup> The more articulate musho even becomes a missionary for his hen's anti-male views. This pathetic wimp is, quite naturally, hailed by feminists as the "new man". He is the termagant feminist's ideal man.

The masculinist belongs to an altogether different species from the macho and the musho. He does not suffer from most of the illusions of the macho; he is not drawn to macho ambitions; and he views the musho with robust contempt. In keeping with his commitment to the liberation of men from nest slavery, the masculinist would end the psychological, social and legal conditions for that slavery, and create instead conditions for equitable relations between the complementary sexes.

If men have not yet revolted in the wake of feminism, it is because there are still two few masculinists around. This is so because mother-power still produces far too many machos; and because termagants have taken so many lapsing machos in tow and made them into mushos; and because far too many men are ignorant of female power and its ways and means. Consequently, the liberation of men depends crucially on the spread of the masculinist understanding of male-female relations.

The masculinist is a libertarian. His commitment to male liberty, and his understanding of the conditions for male liberty, shape his beliefs.

The masculinist accepts that, contrary to what the macho believes and the feminist claims, it is a woman's world, and not a man's.

The masculinist accepts that, contrary to feminist propaganda and macho illusions, the arch enemies of feminism are not men, but that vast majority of matriarchists who do not wish to give up their traditional powers and privileges. Since patriarchy is but a facade for a basic matriarchy, the men whom feminists claim as their enemies are simply fall guys for the matriarchists. Masculinists, therefore, would redirect the feminist arrows to their proper destination, namely, matriarchy.

The masculinist accepts that, as the calypso songs say, "the woman is smarter" and "woman is boss". The masculinist accepts that men are the biologically more dispensable sex — which is why societies train men for high risk occupations like hunting and war, whereas wombs (and their carriers) are protected to maximize a society's reproductive capacity, hence its chances of survival.

The masculinist does not believe in being owned by any woman; nor does he believe in owning any woman. He recognizes that the owning of a human being by another was abolished long ago, and quite rightly too, and he has no interest in having the practice revived in any form.

In his encounters with women, the masculinist's role model is not Adam, who he has little reason to respect; he takes after Gilgamesh and Odysseus, who knew women well enough to defeat their schemes and survive their revenge; who demonstrated that the resolute man, who understands woman, has little cause to fear her.

The masculinist believes that every woman has every right to do whatever she wants with her body, except enslave a man with it. If she wants to board it, and tender her unbroken hymen to the worms in her grave, that is her prerogative. If she wants to give her genitals to any man, or to twenty men, or to a thousand; or to a chicken or goat or gorilla or horse or hippo or elephant or polar bear (in that alleged order of mounting vigour) — that too is her business.

The masculinist does not believe in clitoridectomy; he sees it as a great strategic weapon against men. The uncut clitoris, he knows, would make women as randy as men, if not more so; it would end that sexual restraint which gives a woman power over the sexually desperate male.

The masculinist is not prepared to sell his lifelong labour to any woman in exchange for her ova and her womb. If he decides to *rent* ova and womb, he pays the going rate or even better; but he will not enslave himself to a nest, just for the illusion of *owning* ova and womb. He cannot wait for the day when cloning will make the womb obsolete, and womb renting superfluous.

The masculinist has no quarrel with love itself. He knows that a woman's love, when she is not nest-minded, when she is either pre-pubescent or post-menopausal, can be quite safe and pleasant for a man. But he also knows that it is rare, most rare, for a woman, between puberty and menopause, to indulge in non-nesting, non-predatory love. Being a seasoned realist, a masculinist is, in Diane Wakoski's words, "a beast of the jungle and knows better than to disregard the nature of an animal".<sup>110</sup> Therefore,

When he tangles with a nest-age woman;  
When she gushes out she loves him,  
He cannot but wonder which arm or leg  
The lovely shark is after.<sup>111</sup>

To the masculinist, a wedding is a ceremony in which a woman is issued with a public licence to ride piggyback on a man and exploit him. He therefore does his best not to wed. He does not believe in marrying to obtain househelp. Unlike the macho, he finds it cheaper (financially, emotionally, mentally) to rent househelp than to marry it.

The masculinist does not subscribe to gallantry. He does not believe that a man should open doors for, or give up his seat to, a woman, not unless she is infirm from age or disease, in which case she gets the same considerateness as aged or infirm men. He does not believe that it is for any man to defend any woman's honour: he believes that, if her honour matters to her, a woman is quite capable of defending it herself.

The masculinist believes that every woman should protect herself. She should learn karate and other martial arts so as not to depend on men for her physical defence. He believes that, since rape is better prevented than punished, martial arts, as well as anti-rape techniques, should be standard items in every girl's education.

The masculinist believes that if it is all right for women to be feminists, it is all right for men to be masculinists. What is good for the goose is good for the gander: each should, therefore, define and protect its own interest.

But what is the male interest? Or rather, what are the sorts of things that are NOT in the male interest?

It is not in the male interest to be a nest-slave, or to be programmed for nest-slavery.

It is not in the male interest to be society's specialists in violence, war and other dangerous pursuits. So long as these pursuits are neces-

sary, men and women should equally engage in them. The proposal, in February 1980, by US President Jimmy Carter, to draft men and women for military service;<sup>112</sup> and the decision, in February 1989, by Canada, to integrate its armed forces and make women serve in wartime combat roles, including infantry units,<sup>113</sup> — these are both in the male interest.

It is not in the male interest to maim or slaughter one another in their competition for wombs.

It is not in the male interest to be killed by a woman when a liaison between a man and a woman breaks up, or when the woman, like the notorious Jean Harris, fears the man might leave her.

It is not in the male interest to live in an environment that is polluted with sexual stimulants which weaken men's bargaining position in transactions with women.

It is not in the male interest to be exploited through alimony payments and other rackets of divorce.

Now, how do matriarchism, feminism and masculinism relate to one another? Broadly speaking, feminism and masculinism are two different revolts against matriarchy. Feminism is a revolt by some women who are bored or frustrated within the matriarchist paradise; masculinism is a revolt by some of the helots on whose backs that paradise rests.

How does masculinism regard matriarchism and the tendencies within feminism?

Matriarchists have been the expert exploiters of men since the beginning of human society. Their ideology, matriarchism, still demands the same thing from men: obedient and uncomplaining servitude. Since they are dedicated to nest-slavery, matriarchism and matriarchists are most dangerous to masculine liberty; they are, therefore, the focus of the masculinist's freedom-loving scrutiny.

From the masculinist point of view, the demands of tomboy feminism are understandable, negotiable and mostly reasonable. Equal opportunities in the world of their brothers and fathers for those women who prefer careers in that arena? Yes. Equal pay for equal work? Yes, of course. But why, the masculinist wonders, do tomboy feminists limit their clamour for equality to the soft, white collar jobs in the erstwhile male sphere? If, as they insist, equality should replace complementarity as the overriding principle in the gender division of labour, risk and status, then why do tomboys not demand that both genders be equally drafted into infantry platoons or coal pits? Should gender equality stop

short at the edges of swamps, mine pits and battlefields? Until tomboys demand equal access to the nasty and strenuous jobs which men do, the masculinist can only be skeptical of tomboy feminism's good faith. To the tomboy feminist who advocates gender equality, the masculinist would address this vital question: Is it fair to reorganize the centres of male power to accomodate women without also reorganizing the centres of female power to accomodate men? Upon the answer received would depend the masculinist's attitude to the tomboy feminist.

The demands of tarmagant feminism are another matter entirely. They are not demands with discernible remedies, but rather excuses for guilt-tripping, harassing and mauling men in the unhallowed tradition of harridans and shrews. To termagant feminism belong those man-haters who would legitimize man-killing for nest desertion (Jean Harris and her supporters), or even man-killing for spurned love (Ishtar style), on the implicit ground that a man has no right to choose whom to love, but must submit to any woman's offer of her embrace, like a slave to a tyrant's wishes. To termagant feminism belong the palimony racketeers and the alimony extorters; and the man-humiliators who demand: "Love me, love my menstrual blood" (even in this age of aids?). Of termagant feminism, all sane males must beware.

Paradoxically, the tomboy is the masculinist's least uncongenial type of woman. She is his partial ally in revolt against matriarchism; and, temperamentally, she is like a buddy with whom he could have sex and children. The termagant, though sometimes quite deadly, is the least problematic to the masculinist: her nuisance can usually be avoided from afar.

Being determined to obtain his liberty, the masculinist looks at nest slavery with unsentimental eyes; for only by understanding man's condition can he hope to change it. He accepts that man's subordination to woman derives from the five pillars of woman power. He knows that, with man's loss of control over the kitchen and the cradle, he really has never had any chance of being anything but the slave (glorified when necessary) of woman. As a realist, he accepts that woman's control of the womb will remain unassailable until cloning techniques are perfected. He knows that probably nothing can be done about woman's relatively greater psychological maturity. But he also knows that much can be done, through cultural training, to whittle down woman's control of kitchen and cradle, and to reduce the deranging powers of the erect

penis. He therefore welcomes feminist demands that men be obliged to work as baby-minders. When men get control of the cradle, they will be able to train children in the male interest, and so reduce the numbers of machos and mushos in the world. When men get control of the kitchen, female power over man's stomach will diminish. A man who cooks cannot be half-starved into submission, on any matter, by his wife.

The masculinist believes in bringing about the revolt of the helots of matriarchy. Ah, what a different world it would be if only the macho ego would give up its ingrained stupidity and respond to the masculinist call: Men of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your macho illusions and your nest-slave burdens!

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